

DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBAL LANGUAGES

A hope for the mission



Editor

R. K. Acharyya

**Tribal Research Institute
Govt. of Tripura**

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is an attempt to assess the development process of Tribal Languages in Tripura and to give a focus on the linguistic situation of the region with particular references to the inter-ethnic communication, linguistic identity, growth of ethnic consciousness amongst the major tribal language groups of Tripura like Reang, Noatia, Jamatia, Kolai, Rupini, Murasing Uchai besides other tribal ethnic groups like chakma, Mog, Halam, Kuki etc. tribes. Keeping this in view, Tribals Research Institute has organised a National Seminar in the outline of "Development of Tribal Languages : Sharing of experiences" on the 27th & 28th May, 2006 at Agartala in collaboration with Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India. The Seminar papers presented by scholars of linguists, educationists, research workers social scientists, dignitaries from Tripura, Gowahati University, Tata Institute of social sciences and nearest country Bangladesh have been carefully edited and presented in this book with editorial notes. This will be very much useful to all concerned of the user communities and researchers.

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Edited by
R. K. Acharyya

TRIBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Govt. of Tripura

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Tribal Research Institute

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Development of Tribal Languages

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Preface

The idea of bringing out this book is to present the status of Kok Borok and other tribal languages in the state and also to ascertain the devices for ground based language development strategy. The Tribal Research Institute, has made the task easy by organising a National Seminar on "Development of Tribal Languages : Sharing of Experiences" held at Agartala during May, 2006.

The Kok Borok speaking tribes in the state of Tripura are not at all a minority group rather in and outside the state they would be not less than 10 lakhs. More over, it has got its written script 100 years ago.

It is however a fact that lot of literal works on this language has been done by eminent scholars of linguist during the 1st part of 19th century and by this time hundreds of writers, poets amongst the user communities and outside the communities have contributed a large numbers of poems, short stories, novels, fictions, folk songs, folklore, drama, folk tales etc. to enrich their mother tongue.

But still Kok Borok is facing ups & downs due to some unavoidable reasons. These are mainly derived from the user communities. 2ndly for not initiating Kok Borok as medium of instruction in schools, colleges & university. Another issue is also continuing for the last 40 years over the script controvercy of Kok Borok.

So considering the linguistic situation, the Tribal Research Institute has come forward to assess the thrust areas for developing the tribal languages in the state. Keeping this in view the said seminar was organised by TRI wherein eminent scholars from in an outside the country participated & presented valuable papers & delivered speech sharing their own experience.

These papers were carefully selected and edited to go insight into the objective of the seminar. The consensus of the scholars have also been complied and presented with analytical report and in consideration to theme of the papers.

I hope and believe that this book will be very useful to the research workers, linguists, teachers, students, policy makers, educationists and interested readers. I acknowledge my sincere gratitude to Sri Jitendra Chowdhury, Hon'ble Minister T.W. who has inspired me to take up this works. Director TRI, Sri Bijoy Debbarma has also given me valuable suggestions from time to time for completion of this work. I would like to record my thanks to Smt. Anjali Debbarma, Smt. Rita Shil, Sri Paritosh Bardhan and Sri Jhantu Rn. Das who have typed the manuscript of this book in different spells.

Last of all, I shall be obliged to mention that at the time of editing various topics in this book I had to exercise a lot to make those presentable for which unwilling minor errors might have been there. Hope, such errors could be avoided in the next edition of this book.

R. K. Acharyya



सत्यमेव जयते

Minister

Tribal welfare etc Depts,
Govt. of Tripura

Message

Tribal Research Institute has organised a National level Seminar on the subject "Development of Tribal Languages : Sharing of Experiences". The deliberations of this seminar shall open up wide opportunities for better understanding of the linguistic situation of Kok Borok and other tribal languages in the state.

Sri R.K. Acharyya, Deputy Director, Tribal Research Institute, Govt. of Tripura has done a scholarly work in editing the seminar papers and presenting the analytical report going into the themeline of the seminar subject.

I, on my behalf and the Government, convey my thanks to Sri Acharyya for this endeavour and also hope this book would be useful to all concerned, particularly the research workers, linguists and interested readers for indepth study on Kok Borok and other tribal languages in this region.

(Jitendra Choudhury)



Foreword

The majority of Tripura tribes belong to Mongoloid origin and their languages to the great Sino-Tibetan linguistic family. Under this linguistic family, Bodo itself is a group of languages of which there are dialects like Tripuri, Reang, Uchai, Murasing, Kolai, Rupini, Noatia, Jamatia. All these dialects in a single identity is known as Kok Borok. But Kok- Borok did not have any script till 1897 A.D. It is however a fact that due to long separation among these tribes for nomadic movement and migration, the languages spoken by Tripura tribes could not find any concerted effort for its development in the form of literature though oral literature and culture were handed down from generation to generation.

For so many reasons, progress of Kok-Borok is still at childhood level. By this time however considerable development has been achieved in Kok Borok language & literature. This language is now being used as medium of instruction. But from linguistic point of view and to promote tribal culture including language it is felt necessary to take up more and more academic works to enrich Kok- Borok. Tribal Research Institute considering the needs for development of Kok Borok and other tribal languages in the state has organised a National Seminar. In this present volume, an attempt has been made to find out the thrust areas of development for Kok Borok and other tribal languages. Sri R. K. Acharyya, Dy. Director, TRI who is well conversed about Tribal life & culture of Tripura has taken a good effort for editing the seminar papers which are presented in this book.

I hope this book would obviously be helpful to the linguists, research workers, interested readers and policy makers to assess the linguistic situation in Tripura and to take up all steps for development of Kok Borok and other tribal languages.

(S.K.Das) I.A.S.

Commissioner & Secretary,
Tribal Welfare Department
Govt. of Tripura



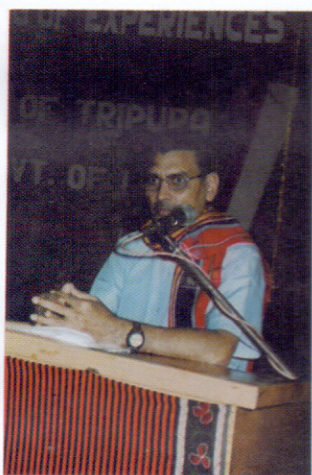
Dignitaries in the Seminar



Inauguration moment



Resource persons in the seminar.



**Sri H.K.Sharma.
Dy. Director General,
Ministry of Tribal Affairs,
Govt. of India.**



**Presidential speech by
Hon'ble Minister,
Tribal Welfare Department
in
the opening session.**

PART - I

**INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS
TO THE ISSUE**

1

INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS TO THE ISSUE

TRIPURA Tribes are known to be migrated to this territory during an unknown time recorded in the ancient period of Indian history from a place in between China - Tibbet, Mongolia and Shan state of Barma. A large Number of tribal communities in big and small groups entered in the North - East India including Burma and Chittagong Hill Tracts. In course of time they migrated in various states of N.E. Region including Tripura.

At a glance in the entire North-East, places like Tripura is dominated by Tripuris, Nagas are dominating the Nagaland, Mizos are dominating Mizoram, Lepchas & Bhutias are dominating Sikim. Similarly other North East states are also dominated by different ethnic origins and tribals specially Boro, Dimasa, Koach, Kacharies etc. It is also a fact that some minor tribes with their separate origin also stay in the states mentioned above having their separate identity, language, culture, heritage and other social traits.

For centuries Tripuris has ruled the 'Tripura kingdom' which was once including a part of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Comilla, Sylhet and western boundary of Mizoram & Assam.

The Languages spoken by Tripura tribes are divided into three distinct groups e.g. Bodo groups, Kuki-chin group, and Arakan groups. Under Bodo groups there are eight tribal groups. These tribes are Tripuri, Jamatia, Noatia, Reang, Kolai, Rupini, Uchai & Murasing. All these tribes belong to the Bodo groups of Tribe and Mongoloid origin. Their language is classified under Tibeto - Burman Group of languages under Sino-Tibetan group of tribes. There are tribes like Darlong, Halam, Kuki, Lusai, Molson, Kipeng, Bong, Kor Bong, Bongcher etc tribes. They speak Tebeto-Burman language of Kuki-chin groups which is most akin to Chinese origin. Mog and Chakma originally belong to Arakan tribes and their language is also known to be as Arakanies. Tribals in general have some cultural and traditional peculiarities, ethnicity, religious limitation, psycho-social adoptability, language variation, economic factor etc. Tripura tribes therefore could be specially identified from their knowledge & belief, their morals, customary laws and store house of language and oral literature.

Kok Borok is the linguistic identity of major tribes of Tripura. It is however a fact that this language have got no script before 1st part of 19th century. The pioneer worker on this language was not a person from the user communities. His name was Doulat Ahamed. He expressed the language in Bangla script as tone & tune script using Bangla Alphabet. The literate people of speaker community was then recognised only the Tripuris, the ruling community. But the important factor was that though the family language of the then kings was Kok Borok, still they did not practise it and took any interest to enrich it. The tribal culture was then practised only in the lap of hills. Tradition was then used to hand down from

Comilla, Sylhet and western boundary of Mizoram & Assam. generation to generation orally as there was no written script and literate section in true sense. Thakur Radha Mohan the then Minister of Royal Court, had keen interest in mother tongue. He deeply concentrated himself to understand the root of his mother tongue. Similarly he has exercised over other tribal communities' dialects. He ultimately found that beside Tripurries, the Reang, Jamatia, Kolai, Uchai, Noatia, Rupini, Murasing speak similar dialect and understand each other's dialect having little variation.

Radha Mohan Thakur, wrote many research papers, article on mother tongue and presented the mother tongue of eight tribal group, as "Kok Borok" (people's language). He has also wrote his remarkable book of Kok Borok grammar viz 'Kok Borokma' in Bangla script. The book still have equal importance as pioneer work in Kok Borok grammar. After Radha Mohan, hundreds of literary works were done by many writers & poets. But it is not so easy to accept Bangla script by a section of the user community and demanded Roman script for Kok Borok . On 19th January 1979, Kok Borok got its recognition as one of the official languages of Tripura. But script issue remains same even to day and a section of writers are propagating for roman script and other for Bangla script. Naturally therefore, progress of literature of this language is not achieving its expected goal. The root of language development depends on its massive use for creation of literature, poem, drama, folk lore, folk tales, essay, fiction, epics, analytical report/ studies besides text books on mother tongue and core subjects of various discipline.

In case of Kok Borok language it is however a fact that

we could pass certain milestone towards its development but still long way to go. Mother tongue as a vernacular subject is being taught in some primary school of TTAADC upto class II and in some cases upto V. It is also a great pleasure that up to class XII courses as a vernacular subject Kok Borok is being taught in some schools. But due to lack of language planning all these attempts of the Govt. are not being successful to the expected level. Due to lack of infrastructure, text books, teachers, training issues. This language is also lagging behind State Govt. though have desires to impart Kok Borok upto secondary level but several problems dishearten and crippled student-teacher - guardian combination. Major problem found with School Board in supplying text books etc. Political decision also frequently pushed student towards indefinite situation over script issue. As a result in every primary school, of TTAADC area where Kok Borok is being taught as 1st Language became frustrated due to change of text from Bangla script to Roman script and Roman script to Bangla script. Thus the entire scenario remains hopeless, time consuming and against of children's future.

Keeping, in view of these adverse situations, Tribal Research Institute attempted to understand the real position by exchange of thought and opinion among the tribal intellectuals, Linguists, researchers, literalists, college university students, teachers of college & university, KBT, social scientists by organising a National Seminar at Agartala in active collaboration with Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

The seminar was held from 27-28 th May 2006. The seminar topic was "Development of Tribal Languages" : "Sharing of experience". Apart from the inaugural session there were three technical sessions in this two days seminar. All

together there were 500 participants amongst the Kok Borok speaking teachers, head master, head mistress, Inspector of schools, writers, poets, college teachers, school teacher, Kok Borok Teachers, Language lovers, College and University students. Beside, large scale participation also was there from other sections like scholars of linguists, Administrators, Researcher, Social Activists, interested audiences and others. The Seminar was also graced by eminent National scholar of Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), Prof. Janki Andharia, Prof. Anil Boro of Gowahati University, scholars of our neighbouring country Bangladesh namely Md. Mesba Kamal and Mr. Rabindranath Soren, Secretary, National Tribal Board, Bangladesh and Prof. A. K. Mukharjee vice chancellor of Tripura University. The VIP dignitaries of the seminar were Sri Aghore Deb Barma, CEM, TTAADC, Tripura, Sri Jitendra Chowdhury, Minister of Tribal Welfare, Tripura, Sri Banamali Sinha, Commissioner, Education Deptt, Govt of Tripura, Sri H.K. Sharma, Dy. Director General, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt of India. Sri Aghore Deb Barma, Hon'ble CEM, TTAADC has kindly inaugurated the seminar and Sri Jitendra Choudhury, Hon'ble Minister, Tribal Welfare was the president of the inaugural function.

Key Note address was delivered by Prof. Janki Andharia, while Dr. K. B. Jamatia of Tripura University has given, the welcome address in the seminar. The seminar was presided over by Sri Jitendra Chowdhury Hon'ble Minister of Tribal welfare Tripura, and presidential address was delivered by him. Sri Bijoy Debbarma, Director, TRI had delivered vote of thanks. All other dignitaries in the dais given their valuable speech describing aim and objectives of the seminar and detailed about status of Kok Borok including other tribal languages and hope for the mission to develop those in all sectors.

The technical sessions were Presided by (i) Prof. Janki

Andharia, (ii) Prof. Mihir Dev and (iii) Prof. S. K. Choudhury. Language can't grow and flourish at its level of aspiration if all out efforts are not there amongst the user community. All together 13 nos. research oriented papers were read out in the seminar. Each and every participants amongst the linguists, writers, poets, educationists, student, teachers have participated in the discussion and question-answer sessions. Prof. Mesbah Kamal, Sri Rabindranath Soren, Dr. Shyamal Das, Dr. Nilmani Debbarma have shared their experiences and delivered very resourceful speech before the house in the 1st technical session.



Home Sweet Home : A typical tribal family in an idyllic environment. The traditional tribal hut is known as Tong Ghar.

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EDITOR'S NOTE AND REVIEW OF PAPERS

The Seminar had three distinct parts as per its schedule (i) Inaugural Session (ii) Technical Session (iii) Valedictory Session.

1. Inaugural Session :

At the outset **Dr. K.B. Jamatia, Deputy Registrar, Tripura University** has delivered his welcome address in the seminar. Other dignitaries have also participated whole heartedly with their resourceful speech which made spell bound all the delegates of different discipline and made the seminar meaningful in true sense.

Dr. K.B. Jamatia, T.U. : In his welcome address Dr. Jamatia mentioned before the participants and distinguished guests about the background for conducting this Seminar. He introduced Prof. Mrs. Janki Andharia of Tata Institute of social science to the dignitaries in the dais and participants in the seminar. Prof. Andharia was the Special Guest in the Seminar. He expressed that the Seminar might be successful in sole hearted participation of all present.

Sri Banamali Sinha, IAS, Commissioner, Education:

The deliberation of Commissioner : Education in Tribal Language in the state is the most important issue as more than 10 Lakhs of people speak Kokborok. As per opinion of Sri Sinha, an effort to develop tribal language is not only an issue of the Education Deptt. But all wings of Govt., including TTAADC should come forward to take active part to improve all tribal languages.

The most important point he raised was that if language & culture were not nourished and given exposure then an identity crisis might be developed among the user communities. Commissioner Sri Sinha expressed that all of us have equal responsibility for proper implementation of article 29 of Indian constitution where in it is clearly mentioned about tribal identity, their language, their culture and vision. So this Seminar would be very useful to go insight into the problem and finding new path to resolve major issues related to language development.

Sri. A.K. Mukherjee, V.C, Tripura University in giving his speech expressed that language is a medium through which all distances from ethnic diversity to geo-regional obstacles could be overcome. He referred the Indian Society as an example. Prof. Mukherjee stated a vital point that Tripura tribes are under process of transition in all sectors of life. He also expressed that new course of Kok Borok language will be introduced as early as possible in Tripura University at Degree and Master Degree Level as language subject. Students from tribal and non tribal communities shall have equal opportunity to learn Kokborok as a subject.

Sri. Aghore Debbarma, CEM, TTAADC, in his speech explained the seminar as a great Occasion. The thrust point of his deliberation are 1) Govt. Patronisation is necessary to develop the language ii) kok-Borok speakers should have sincere effort to develop their mother tongue iii) Kok-Borok

presently is taught in few primary schools up to class-v, but has no use because there is no scope to learn in mother tongue from class-VI. This is a failure before us and a large number of dropout as a result is for this reason iv) A language Directorate needs to be set up immediately to examine all tribal languages in the state and take scientific approach for equal development. Sri Debbarma confidently stated that script is not at all an important issue. Debate may be there but language development issue should not be compromised. He expressed that besides socioeconomic development, positive steps require from all corner to reach a definite goal for language development.

Sri H.K. Sharma, Dy D G of Ministry of Tribal Affairs Govt of India was the Chief Guest of the Seminar. In his speech Sri Sharma stated about the policy and strategy of Govt. of India for upliftment of socio-economic life of backward tribes in the country including tribal identity, language, culture. Moreover keeping this in view, Ministry is Planning to strengthen TRIs so that all sort of research studies including language development works could be taken up.

Sri Jitendra Choudhury Minister, T.W. etc. Deptt, Tripura, in his Presidential speech strongly mentioned that status of mother tongue in South Asia and in our neighbouring country Bangladesh has unfolded our eyesight about the emergent need to progress the language, culture and heritage of Tripura tribes. Sri Choudhury specifically mentioned "Language is not only mere a communication medium but it is more, it is certainly freedom, justice and to grow at own's aspiration." The vital point of his speech was that during last part of last century, people of Tripura particularly Kok Borok speaking people had to face identity crisis as marginalised speak up communities. More over the Maharajas of Tripura though were

rich in Knowledge and learning from generation still they neglected mother tongue (Kok Borok) rather they encouraged counterpart Bengali Language. In his long speech Sri Choudhury mentioned about Janashiksha Movement (1945) through which tribal people in general got inspired and understood the importance of language, culture, education and democratic rights. He expressed that the root of present status of Kok-Borok language is due to its recognition accorded by the Left led Govt. in 1979 as one of the State Languages which had enormous enthusiasm among all Kok-Borok speaking communities. He narrated this recognition as an landmark and symbolic end of exploitation and a new era of Kok-Borok language. Because since then Kok-Borok is being taught in more than 1300 primary Schools in Tripura as a subject and medium of instruction. As per his opinion, tribal culture like folk song, folk dance, folk music and other cultural art form of tribals of Tripura were rejuvenated right from then. Not only this among tribals a long listed Kok-Borok writers began to enrich this language by contributing in all sections of language and literature. Kok-Borok got its state and national level recognition for its store house of rich vocabulary, literal entity and folk based tradition. But the script controversy remain stands still since 1979. Talking about Kok-Borok medium schools he mentioned that teachers in Kok-Borok medium school are not inadequate, but in many schools, teachers are not competent. He expressed with great surprise that only 20,000 Bishnupriya Manipuries could stand in one for their language, for its growth, for its recognition, but one million Kok-Borok speakers remaining nonchalant. He expressed hope that the user communities of Kok-Borok will come up with new thought, ideas, new path to develop Kok-Borok. Of course a new debate has raised on the process of Kok-Borok

Development over the Script. Still it is welcomed. Sri Choudhury reinforced that debate should not be for the debate's sake. Govt. notion is also not for any particular script rather believes on scientific approach and popular sentiment of its speaking communities. He clearly mentioned that Govt. is continuing the old practice only in lieu of offering the issue in the uncertainty. He mentioned that debate on script of Kok-Borok could not be a primary object of language development. Let the language flourish at its own way. Let the poets, authors exercise over script as it is inescapably bound up with the progress to develop a language. He expressed hope for a positive feed back out of this two days seminar.

2. Technical Session :

The technical session of the seminar had 2 (two) parts

- (i) Deliberation of speech by eminent scholars/linguists and
- (ii) Presentation of papers.

(i) The speeches delivered by eminent scholars attended as guests in the seminar are as below :

Rabindra Nath Soren is an eminent scholar and general secretary of National Tribal Board, Bangladesh. Sri Soren participated in this seminar as Guest of Honour and delivered a speech in the 1st executive session of the seminar. He stated in his deliberation about socio-economic life of different Tribal Communities in Bangladesh. Giving detailed about his work with tribal people, he stated that he stood in front of all tribal movements for acquiring social justice, economic demand and right to primary education in mother tongue. He talked about education, health care and economic upliftment of tribals. Rabindra Nath Soren stated that he has visited many times in the tribal areas of West Bengal and near by Assam and Tripura and tried to understand the problem of tribals, their life style,

their tradition, their language. He expressed that santal language in West Bengal progressed a lot as like as Kok Borok in Tripura. He recalled that Bhasa Movement in Bangladesh was successful because of participation by lakhs of people from the user communities. Similarly quoting Sri Anil Boro he mentioned about sacrifices of Boro students for their mother tongue.

Concluding his talk Sri Soren expressed that Kokborok and other tribal languages of Tripura will rich in all branches of literature and folk in near future.

Prof. Mesbah Kamal who was the special guest of the seminar came from Bangladesh. In his address at the 1st technical session as a speaker, he shared his experiences of the field when he worked for development of tribal languages in all respects including medium of instruction at primary level. He has studied and worked as team leader for three projects relate to primary education in tribal areas. He expressed that primary education in Bangladesh particularly in tribal areas of Garos, Chakmas, Tripuries, Mech, Moran etc have not progressed enough only because of medium of instruction in their respective mother tongue are not introduced. Prof. Kamal shared his vast experience about the problems of tribal children as reading materials confronting with their mother tongue. He cited some logical examples which can not be avoided in any way. Language problem in between students and teachers stands in the classroom because teacher do not know his student's mother tongue. Prof. Kamal in his finding expressed that the country like Bangladesh wherein Bengali is the dominating language in every sphere of life other small language can't grow and flourish at its expectation level. Tribal language reservation or promotion system for tribal communities are not recognised in Bangladesh. But some of

the social organisations initiated pre-primary school in mother tongue to compensate the situation.

Prof. Mesbah Kamal delivered his speech in the context of scenario of tribal languages and utility of those languages as medium of instruction in Bangladesh. Talking about minority tribal communities of Bangladesh he stated that during the British period, these tribal communities were not given any recognition even as human race. There is no 6th schedule or 8th schedule in the constitution of Bangladesh as like as it is exist under Indian Constitution. Nor even Bangladesh govt gives any identity for them as separate race other than the Bangali till 1997. Due to identity crisis the whole Chittagaon Hill Tracts was under civil war during 1997 at the leadership of Manabendra Chandra Larma. He expressed deep grievances as for not having reservation for ST/ SC and OBC in Bangladesh. As a consequence Tribals like Tripura Garos, Santal, Chakma, Moran, Mahali etc are socio-economically so backward that they are still at primitive stage. They have no education, no fertile land, no suitable domestic land, no sanitation, no infrastructure in remote areas. In Several occasion their fertile land snatched away under govt policy and by Bengali Muslim counterpart. Naturally therefore, the tribal unrest prevailed in Chattagram. After 1997 a peace treaty was signed in between Bangladesh Govt and Tribal Agitators. for peace process and development in every sphere of life. In order to that agreement, a separate ministry was formed under Bangladesh Govt. But Prof.. Kamal expressed with great regret that some programmes for development in tribal areas though taken still nothing has till done for introducing tribal language as medium of instruction in primary school. Some Social Organisation among chakmas however set up primary schools introducing mother tongue but no attempt till now taken by

the govt for initiating mother tongue. Prof. Kamal further stated that mother tongue practised among tribals in Bangladesh still have no implication as these are not recognised. Some of these languages however have own script and practice in their respective village/ home only.

Talking about his experiences he stated that children in primary schools of Bangladesh get bitter experiences as they can't express themselves in school classes in their mother tongue. He told it out of his experiences during a survey taken at Chittagong in tribal areas. The teacher - in charge of respective school also cant understand tribal language for which there remain an interaction gap in between teacher and student. Prof. Mesba Kamal has also passed his personal opinion to overcome from this struck situation to the effect that at pre-primary level mother tongue must be taught as medium of instruction and for primary level 50% of the course content may be in mother tongue and for rest 50% , 25% as oral and 25% as written on dominant regional language which would be ultimate main stream of language. In his study report Prof. Kamal one thing cleared in his opinion that tribal people in general in Bangladesh are in favour of getting their children educated in Bangla medium because Bangla is the main business and communication language in Bangladesh and job market oriented. He has also quoted a reference of China and Russia wherein bilingual schooling system for minor children are being followed and if possible this formula will be advantageous for Bangladesh and tribal children for primary education Prof. Mesba Kamal in brief also expressed that in Bangladesh "Bangla Academy" has been established by the Govt after a prolong movement for it. In the Academy lot of exercises are being done for exploring all possibilities to develop Bangla literature and preservation and promotion of all

traditional components. Like wise his opinion is that for development of Kok Borok, similar Language Academy as well as Tribal Education Board/ Directorate shall be set up in Tripura. This institute could see all possibilities to introduce Kok Borok as medium of instruction up to University in true sense. Moreover Tribal Language Academy shall exercise over development of literature & culture of all tribal communities of Tripura. Regarding status of Kok Borok language, he expressed that script issue here is a vital question no doubt, but the user community can't restrict it to flourish, enrich because on understanding with its rich store house of literature and other cultural traits, "Academy Award' is given for this language. As per opinion of Prof. Kamal, script issue is immaterial in wider sense because in any script in the world our own feelings, thought process, oral traditions etc could be expressed and shortcomings which remain in every scripts could be fulfilled with scientific adoption of Alphabets for specific sound, tone words etc. Hence Bangla Script which is being followed for centuries have equal importance with any other script if finally adopted.

In his concluding remarks Prof. Mesba Kamal mentioned that this seminar has fuelled to explore more writers, poets, Dramatist and gear up new generation to develop their mother tongue. Similarly he expressed that all minority tribal Languages in Tripura have equal importance to survive and grow.

Dr. Nilmani Debbarma a tribal intellectual and well known personality in Tripura, is well conversant about the history of Tripura from Monarchy to Democracy. In his speech he has expressed that though Kokborok is a language spoken by major tribal groups in Tripura unfortunately no fundamental-works for development of Kokborok so far done either by the

then rulers or by democratic form of Govt. till 1979. He has also opined that due to patronisation by the earlier rulers, Bangla Language was the Royal Court Language. Where as Kokborok could have been the State Language. Dr. Debbarma expressed in his deliberation that the next course of movement was for making a written script of Kokborok and spread of education among the major tribals of Tripura. He recalled names of Aghore Debbarma, Dasarath Debbarma, Sudhannya Debbarma, Hemanta Debbarma, and others who led the movement under the banner of "Janashiksha Samity"& "Gana Mukti Parisad" and also their awareness programme for social, economic, educational, Language & Literal reformation to build up self reliance among tribals of Tripura. To talk about chronological development of Kokborok literal works he stated that scientific approach was started, since and after 1960 through publication of 'Chethuang' a periodical in Kokborok where in poem, short stories, plays in Kokborok were published. Since then Kokborok had to face ups & downs. Attempt was taken by the Govt. in the year 1983 to introduce Kokborok as medium of instruction at primary level. But on evaluation it was observed that tribal children do not have scope to learn school lesson in mother tongue from class-VI or there are hardly two-three schools upto class-X.

It is however a fact that Tribal Intelligentsia involves themselves for writing & publishing book/periodical, etc. in Kokborok. Tripura University is also running a Diploma Course in Kokborok. Two commissions also appointed by the Govt. for having specialist report but actually they could not give specific direction.

But Dr. Debbarma in his narration² did not mention specific points to be adopted for developing the language. The most important aspects of Kokborok is that majority people in

the State are non Kokborok speaking people from Bengali counter part. The most negative part is that Kokborok speaking communities do not talk in their mother tongue with other community people and if it is done so the scenario could have been in other weave. This could not be happened due to psycho-social barrierness, illiteracy and economic reasons. Dr. Debbarma however expressed his hope that aspiration of people will be fulfilled.

Dr. Shyamal Das, a linguist and Lecturer, T.U. in his deliberation raised a question about standardisation of language. He explained that Bengali language spoken or even written in Dharma Nagar is quite different as it being spoken in Belonia, though both are Bangla. Referring to language spoken in Govt. offices, University or used in Govt. work is treated as standard Bangla but of any one goes to Kolkata it is treated a substandard Bangla. Dr. Das cited an example that Kokborok is the main stream line language among the tribals of Tripura and even then there are eleven tribal communities who do not know Kokborok. These languages may not have any written script at this stage but time will come when they will feel identity crisis to retain and preserve their culture.

Talking about script of Kok-Borok Dr. Das mentioned that it is the people who will decide which one is the best one for them. He stated about Sanskrit Language, because people denies to take this Language and its script though Govt. spent lot of amount for popularise Sanskrit language. There are many more instances that one language community use more than one script for creation of their literature. He mentions that Hindi speaking community use Urdu script besides Hindi and also for their own dialect. So script can't be a issue before Kok-Borok development. Dr. Das pointed out about centre of hegemonic

and marginalised language. Kok-Borok is now the centre Language of Tripura tribes but what would be for Reang Language or Halam Language as these are presently marginalised language. He stated that loan words should be taken from all tribal languages of the state, so that all marginalised linguistic group could feel that Kok-Borok is their own language. In fact Dr. Das's opinion is acceptable because of the historical fact that Bangla language though is a centre language of Tripura still Kok-Borok should be popularised so that people of Tripura in general may find scope to see Kok-Borok as their own language through generations. This is further essential for acculturation of both the communities & peaceful coexistence in the region.

(ii) Analysis on the presented papers :

All together the seminar had 3(three) inner sessions chaired by (i) Prof. Janki Andharia (ii) Prof. Mihir Deb and (iii) Prof. S.K. Choudhury. In these inner sessions 13 Nos. of research oriented scholarly papers were read out before approximately 500 delegates in the seminar. Prof. Janki Andharia at the outset of the inner session presented her key note paper which had great impact upon the delegates. Other papers were carefully edited and presented here for all out knowledge about the contemporary status of Kok Borok and other languages of the State.

Prof. Janki Andharia, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai was the *special guest* of the seminar. In her key note address Prof. Andharia elaborately described the significance of tribal language development. She shared her experiences gathered when working in Gujrat, Maharastra, Andaman - Nicobor Island, Ladakh etc places for about minority Languages - its status and possibilities she referred about what

is tribe, how they are categorised for the purpose well administrative expediency as well as issues of linguistic and cultural diversity in planning for education. She narrated that tribal's identity is in their language, traditional practise of lively hood, folk culture. But the state, the nation and the region have contributed no meaningful steps to develop those cultural traits. Another important point she raised that distortions in languages and its understanding were created by high caste, ruling classes of India. We have also witnessed of regional variation happened on the basis of language speaking communities of the state / region. Prof. Andharia pointed about some the true picture of linguistic genocide. Absence of minority languages from school as medium of instruction is the basic reason to make it unimportant, insignificant, morbid and invisible and could lead to death of language. Children of minority language speakers therefore adopted with the majority language sacrificing their mother tongue. She stated that in this way thousands of minority Languages have become dead language. She described in her paper about different language spoken in Indian subcontinent. She find 1652 mother tongues in India linguistically belong to five different language families. Quoting 1991 census report she mentioned that 114 Nos of languages are grouped. Out of which 75.28% speaker communities are from Indo-European Language families and only 0.97% speaker communities are from Tibeto-Barman Language families.

In fact Prof. Andharia presented a methodical research paper on minority languages and pointed negative part of the Govt policies alongwith her inferences to develop those languages in specific direction.

In his paper *"Kok Borok : people's language"* Sri R. K. Acharyya elaborately narrated about ethnic origin

of Tripura tribes, assimilation of language spoken by eight tribal groups which ultimately accounted as Kok Borok. Sri Acharyya pointed out two major questions. (i) Kok Borok is not only a language of eight tribal groups rather it is a language of Tripura and irrespective of caste and creed shall have the right to go insight into the this Language. He has given stress for introduction of Kok Borok not only in tribal dominated in schools but in all primary schools of Tripura. He expressed that children of all communities need to read and learn Kok Borok besides Bengali or English. His thrust point is that every community have constitutional right to get education in mother tongue and in Tripura situation equal importance must be given by the govt so that children out side the Kok Borok speaking group could learn Kok Borok as like as mother tongue or as Tripura Language. It is very much important for social harmony, peace and prosperity of Tripura. He concluded with his views that Kok Borok should not be confined only amongst the tribes. To develop it Kok Borok should be a language of 33 lakhs of people in Tripura. Because this is the only way to enrich Kok Borok and socio-economic development of the state. 2ndly according to his opinion the user communities finds no interest in fact psychologically not boosted as this language have got no scope for much use in practical life. He specifically stated that for development of Kok Borok - "Need to be Done" word must be omitted rather Govt action are that Text Book preparing works from primary level to university level must be taken by 2007-08 academic session. Text shall right now be in the shape of Bangali subject's course content for H.S., Degree, Honours and MA. Degree level. Similarly employment generation as subject Teacher is required at this stage.

Sri Anil Boro is an eminent scholar in linguistics and particularly on Bodo language. He is a lecturer of Gowahati

University in the Deptt of Languages. He was the Special Guest in the seminar and presented a very resourceful paper on Bodo Language and its stages of development alongwith problem beared by the user community. He elaborately mentioned about civil movements took place for recognition of Bodo Language in Assam. In this context of the seminar, this paper was very much relevant because of its affinity with that of Kok Borok language and rest languages of Mongoloid Tribes. The topic of Sri Boro's paper was **"A profile of Boro language : Some aspects Language Development."** From his paper it is understood that like Kokborok, under Boro/Bodo groups there are corpus languages like Mech, Rava, Kok Borok, Garo Dimasa, Tiwa, Koch languages . Similarly referring to the renowned scholar of linguistics, Chatterjee and Shafer, he stated that. Bodo-Naga tribes have the same origin. They also referred those tribes as Assam - Barma tribal group. Linguist like Harison, further grouped them as Bodo-Naga and Burmese-Kuki-Chin group of Tribes. This grouping however made to understand the terms of their mother tongue as Boro, Garo, Dimasa, Twipra, Twisa, Rabha etc. Tribes.

Talking about Bodo script Sri Anil Boro mentioned that they did not have any written script of their language for which they had no literature or record of history. But during 1951 Bangla and Assamese scripts were used by the speaking community for publishing short stories, poems, journals etc. Christjan Missionaries however collected and published Bodo folk tales, love songs, sayings etc, in Roman script. alongwith religious books. From 1963 Bodo language was introduced for primary education in Assamese script and secondary level from 1968. But situation went down when Bodo youths started movement for a separate Boro Land and Roman script for their language. The agitation however came to end as the leaders of

Bodo Sahitya Sava settled the issue with Govt of India by accepting "Devnagari script". Since then Devnagari script is being used with little variation as to the need. Bodo youths were then sent to jail for the movement as he mentioned. It is most remarkable to mention here that Bodo language in Debnagari script got wide application by the user community instead of Roman script. It is important in other point of view that Bodo and Kokborok Language are very nearer to each other. So the propagators of Roman Script for Kok Borok language as absolute is not correct, rather Bangla Script which is being used from the last part of 18th century could be the correct solution as loan words in Kok Borok are mainly taken from Bangla language and people in general in Tripura are familiar with the script being used from last century.

Sri Anil Boro in his paper mentioned about old and rare publication on Bodo folklore, tales, rhymes, songs, grammar etc written by some missionaries since 1888 to 1895 AD. He recalled the name of Anderson. Sri Anil Boro concluded his presentation with a detailed narration of Bodo literature so far published up till 1951. As per his opinion 1952 was the turning point of Bodo Language and literature when Bodo Sahitya Sabha formed. Because from that time systematic and scientific studies and also publications on Bodo literature was began. Hundreds of eminent scholars contributed for their mother tongue. He also expressed that the press and print media and electronic media are contributing a lot for the modern weave of Bodo language and literature. According to Sri Anil Boro, Bodo or Boro Language now treated as one of the modern Indian Language for its strength of literature. This Language is also being taught as course content at under graduate and post graduate level of Gowahati and Dibrugarh University as elective subject. In his speech Sri Anil Boro also expressed

hope for development of Tribal Languages in Tripura and particularly Kok Borok which is the major language of Borok Race, the sister language of Boro tribe.

Sri Kumud Kundu Chowdhury in his paper *"Introduction of Kok Borok Language as a medium of instruction. Prospects problem"* mainly went insight into the status of Kok Borok, its chronological development, its linguistic analysis with other dialects of North Eastern tribes like Bodo, Mech, Kacchari, Rabha, Garo etc. He explained in his paper views of eminent scholars of linguistics right from English Anthropologists to Dr. S.K. Chatterjee in respect of identification of tribes and their dialects with grouping of language families. Other major points of his paper are (i) constitutional right of education through mother tongue : Here Sri Chowdhury mentioned about the people's right of education through mother tongue as ensured under Article 350 and article 29A of Indian Constitutions wherein it is clearly stated that "any section of citizen residing in India or any part thereof having a distinct language / script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same" In international forum it is also ensured by UNESCO. Referring to Late Dasarath Deb who had keen interest for general education of tribals and initiation of mother tongue as medium of instruction, Sri Chowdhury strongly mentioned that Kok Borok attained 1500 years as a living language of Borok race. So the user communities have the right to get their children educated in mother tongue. (ii) Another point he raised about movement of user communities of Kok Borok to spread of education among the tribals as well as adoption of Kok Borok as language subject. He recalled the "JANA Shiksha Movement" and political will of different parties formed govt in time to time in Tripura. (iii) Sri Chowdhury narrated govt attempt recognising

Kok Borok as official language in the year 1979 and introduction of it as medium of instruction since 1981 at primary level. He has pointed out another vital point here that missionaries school wherein medium of instruction is English, student need to read in trilingual situation for which mother tongue is being ignored. He also elaborately mentioned dropout picture of tribal student in those sector. Keeping this in view he stressed for a language planning. Concluding his paper Sri Chowdhury urged upon the tribal elite to come forward and contribute to strengthen Kok Borok in all respects, so that Kok Borok may be taught as a vernacular subject in undergraduate and post graduate level.

The suggestions he quoted in his paper are the actual position and need for taking steps to develop and promote Kok Borok. He expressed hope as "Kok Borok shall over come one day."

Smt. Indira Boro is a lecturer of Boro (MIL) of Gowahati University. In her research paper "*Boro Language : A brief history of development*" Smt. Boro explained very authentically with supporting references about Boro language and its chronological development as one of the major Indian Languages. Talking about its constitutional recognition, she reported in her paper that Boro or Bodo tribe have the same linguistic affinity with all other north eastern tribes including Tripura Tribes and races like Mech, Rabha, Raj-Bangshi, Coach of North Bengal and similarly Dimasa, Moran, Garo, Naga etc tribes of N.E. Region. Smt Boro mentioned in her study report that in the development process of Bodo Language both in the Bengali script and Roman script have contribution at the initial stages she stated that during the last country, the Tripurah Language (Kok Borok) did not have impact upon the user communities because of tribal people in general used to live in

hill areas and had no practice to send their children in school. More over the Thakur people of urban areas did not give recognition to Kokborok. C. W. Bolton who was an eminent linguist and exercised on Kok Borok Language has also been referred by her. Smt Boro explained that the user community of Bodo language had notable sacrifice for their language and for its present status.

Rabindra Kishore DebBarma is a well known teacher and writer of Kok Borok literature, grammar, Dictionary, short stories, fictions etc. He presented a paper in the seminar viz '*Kok Borok Forwards : A Developed language*'. In his research article he expressed his discontent over the issue of Kok Borok development even it has passed 100 years and got govt recognition over 25 years. Sri Deb Barma though can't present any new concept even than he explained and raised some relevant questions over the steps of the govt for development of Kok Borok. He pointed out about the script issue as a major reason for which the user communities become confused. This is only reason for which writer groups are not being formed. However he urged upon the scholars of linguistics and Kok Borok writers for a concerted effort to develop Kok Borok like other rich tribal languages of North Eastern states.

Sri Shyam Lal DebBarma is a well known Kok Borok literature who have contributed a lot on Kok Borok language and literature. He wrote a good number of short stories, Novels, fictions as well as books on poem. Sri Deb Barma is also a cultural personality who have vast knowledge on cultural components of tribals of Tripura.

In his research paper '*An evaluation of Kok Borok Language and literature*' presented a detailed history of Borok race of Tripura, their chronological history of migration, ethnic identity and linguistic affinity with Boro,

Rabha communities of Boro Land could be found. As per his opinion, Bodo or Boro Language is the sister language of Kok Borok.

Narrating about Kok Borok, he mentioned that the kings of Tripura did not patronise Kok Borok even though it was their mother tongue rather Maharaja of Tripura enriched Bengali language taking many steps. Kok Borok therefore was in cared, unpractised and unwritten till 19th century. As he said Doulat Ahamed was the pioneer who had written a book Kok Boroma in Bengali script. Rest history of Kok Borok from 1900 AD to 2000 A.D. was the ups downs, started by Thakur Radhamohan Deb Barma's Kokborokma geared up with observation of 100 year's celebration. He cited an example and references from the account of eminent Anthropologists, linguists, high dignitaries of the then period including references of Rajmala to establish the fact that Kok Borok was then not a dead language but a popular language and people including out side the user communities had keen interest to develop it. Sri Deb Barma recalled Janashiksha Movement taken place in Tripura for which 488 nos of primary schools were set up and ultimately got govt recognition in Royal court. As he mentioned next phase of the socio-political situation in Tripura was broken down due to refugee problem and division of the country as well as unfortunate death of the then king of Tripura Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur. Sri Deb Barma virtually explained about the tribal unrest and consequent military oppression that took place in the tribal villages. He opined that 'Gana Mukti Parisad' was then formed by the leaders of JANASHIKSHA Samity. Leaders were then arrested and sent to Hajaribag jail. Among the arrested leaders Sudhannya DebBarma involved himself in Kok Borok literary work and wrote novel like 'Hachuk Khurio', edited periodical like "Kutal

Kathama". In fact that was the turning point of Kok Borok literature and its public appearance. Sri Deb Barma then mentioned about the writers so far contributed for development of this language in the field of short stories, poem, novel, periodicals, drama, folk tales, folk lores and of other literal forms. This article has immense potentiality as we can assess and know details about Kok Borok and its chronological development since last Century.

Dr. Jaya DebBarma in her research paper "*Development of Tribal Language: Some observations*" she referred some of the resourceful works done by eminent linguists like G.A. Grierson, W. W. Hunter and others on tribal languages. She referred about other tribal languages like Manipuri, Khasi, Mizo etc which have got recognition and have rich value for their literature and mass use through print and electronic media. In fact any language in the world grows through oral literature like folk tales, folk lores, songs and also thousands of years passed at thematic stage before it got the written script. Dr. DebBarma expressed hope that Kok Borok will stand with all of its store house before us in order of time.

Smt Kamala Sundari DebBarma in her paper on "*Scientific and Technical Terminology: Basic need to Develop Kok Borok*" presented her paper on Kok Borok vocabulary and its terminology on some scientific points, showing Kok Borok worldwide meaning differences and some words which have no use in Kok Borok. So to strengthen vocabulary in Kok Borok she suggested some norms for taking to take words from other rich languages.

Sri Nagendra Jamatia is a well Known political leader having a background for research and analytical works on tribal life and culture. He wrote many books on tribes and tribal

problems. In his paper "***Some Highlights on Kok Borok***" he mentioned that Kok Borok is passing the days of fourth generation of sino-Tibetan language family. It is very rich in all respects but lost its every possibilities during Maharajas time. This has also been supported by author of Rajmala. Kailash Chandra Sinha, he said. In his paper Sri Jamatia suggested some points to enrich kok Borok (i) extensive use of kok Borok at primary level (ii). to introduce Kokborok at High and Higher Secondary levels (iii). to publish and implement recommendations of Bhasa Commission headed by Sri Pabitra Sarkar.

Sri Hiralal Chakraborty, Director, School Education participated in the seminar representing Education Deptt. The main object of his topic of presentation was "***Status of Kok Borok : As Medium of Instruction***" Major finding in his paper is to make aware the participants, about the actions by Education Department for development of Kok Borok and introduction of it at primary and secondary school level. Some valid data/statistics on the record of schools wherein Kok Borok is being taught upto high school level are mainly described in his paper. However all these data and information would be very much useful to assess the govt provision and achievement, so far obtained in the question to Kokborok and other tribal language development in the state.

Sri K D Nath in his research paper "***Status of Kok Borok Language. As medium of instruction***" : mainly presented a historical report of Tripura since last part of 18th century and related aspects of Kok Borok language. Sri Nath as Director, State Council of Educational Research and Training stated some of the important works so far done by SCERT on tribal language particularly on course content, publication of text books in Kok Borok etc. He has also incorporated some basic

information and statistics in his paper which would be useful for the research workers and interested readers.

Sri Bodhrai Deb Barma is a scholar of tribal languages. He has written so many books on literature and different aspect of Kok Borok language. In his paper written in Bengali viz. *"Development trend of Tribal Languages in the state"* he mentioned that language development process can not be blocked only due to script issue. Because if we look behind to Bengalees, they once learned in Gurukul with medium of instruction as Sanskrit. Likewise Bengali Muslim are still learning in Arabic Script though Bengali is their mother tongue. In his paper he stated a chronological account of Kok Borok development from the last century. He has also suggested about some steps need to be taken for further development of Kok Borok and to popularise it before all.

3. Velidicatory Session :

The Velidicatory Session of the Seminar was very much attractive and informative. Sri Radha Charan Debbarma, Executive Member of Education, TTAADC was the Chief Guest and Dr. Nilmani Debbarma was the President of the function. Other resource persons in the dais were, Sri Rabindra Kishore Debbarma, Prof. Mihir Deb, Prof. S.K. Choudhury and Sri Bijoy Debbarma, Director, TRI.

Prof. Mihir Deb has first sum up the main points raised and discussed in the inner Session of the Seminar. In his address, Sri Radha Charan Debbarma expressed satisfaction for conducting this Seminar by Tribal Research Institute. He narrated that Kok Borok has achieved a lot in literature for which Govt. has introduced Kok Borok in all ADC Schools. Text on Kok Borok also prepared. Beside, he mentioned that all Cultural Components of Tripura Tribes need to preserved. Sri Debbarma appealed before all to come forward for all effort for development of tribal languages of the state. Dr. Nilmani Debbarma conveyed thanks to all of the participants who make the seminar a grand success and meaningful as an true initiative for further development of Tribal language in the State.

3

CONSENSUS OF SCHOLARS

The linguists, the Social Scientists, the Educationists, the Research Scholars, the Social Activists, the Teachers, the Writers, the Poets, the literatures, the Administrators, the Public Representatives, the VIP Dignatories and the Delegates who have participated in this two day's Seminar "Development of Tribal Language : Sharing of Experiences" had the common consensus over the development issues of Kok-Borok & other tribal languages in the State.

Their consensus over Tribal Language Development issues have been carefully complied and presented below for the benefit of the Policy makers, research workers, linguists, user communities and time to time review on the status of Kok-Borok Development issue by the appropriate authority. More over the Govt. Administrative Authority have equal opportunity to take justified decision on the approach of Kok-Borok Development.

Following are the common opinion /Consensus in the Seminar.

1. Kok-Borok should be introduced as vernacular (1st language) subject. The course content shall be of 50% Kok-Borok,

50% Bangla up to Class-VIII Standard in all schools of the State and from Class-IX onward students should have opportunity to choose Kok-Borok or Bangla for their studies up to Honours/Master Degree level. But only for the school dominated 70% by chakma student, course content shall be 50% on Chakma Language i.e. similar to Kok-Borok.

2. Step shall be taken for a separate Directorate for Tribal Languages with a view to develop the Kok-Borok & other tribal languages.

3. Teachers of Kok-Borok shall be given special training on the course content of school syllabus & curriculum.

4. The Course content of Kok-Borok shall be prepared 25% from CBSE course 25% Bangla Literature 50% Kok-Borok literature, Folk & Oral literature.

5. Kok-Borok grammar shall be prepared and equally vocabulary and its terminology shall be developed for standardization of the language.

6. A "Kok-Borok Academic Board" shall be constituted to exercise over text and reading facilities in Kok-Borok and future planning in view of popularising the Kok-Borok Language. The Board shall translate short stories, novels, etc. alongwith best works of our great leaders and publish books obtained National Awards.

7. All out effort shall be taken to implement the recommendations of Bhasa Commission headed by Sri Pabitra Sarkar. Similarly steps need to be taken for inclusion of Kok-Borok in 8th schedule of Indian constitution.

8. Attempt shall be taken for initiation of Kok-Borok in B.Ed. Course and as core subjects for Degree & Post Graduate Degree under Tripura University.

9. Extensive use of print & electronics media, would be useful for language development and participation of mass people.

10. User communities particularly Reang, Uchai, Rupini, Kolai, Murasing, Jamatia shall be encouraged to come forward for core hearted participation in the process of Kok-Borok development. Their folk literature, oral tradition etc. need to be collected and focused in the lime light.

11. The writers, poets and literarists in and outside the user communities shall be encouraged for creating high standard literature in Kok Borok.

12. All the Govt. establishments presently working for development of tribal affairs need to be strengthened so that tribals in Tripura as a whole could be taken under main stream of Indian Culture & Vision.



Reangs : A Primitive tribe in Tripura.

PART - II

LINGUISTIC SITUATION AND RELATED RESEARCH PAPERS PRESENTED

4

Development of Tribal Languages : sharing of Experiences

Prof. Janki Andharia

Introduction :

The Chief Executive Member, TTAADC has made my task a lot easier by referring to certain very crucial issues. I have remained concerned and worked for survival of tribals and their culture. Let me share my experiences. Language is an integral part of social life. It is the most obvious emblem of social identity from the perspective of the speakers. As Oliver Wendell Holmes puts it "Language is solemn thing, it grows out of life, out of its agonies, and its ecstasies, its wants and its weariness. Every language is a temple in which the soul of those who speak it is enshrined."

The significance of development of tribal languages is to be comprehended by the fact that the number of committed people (I refrain from using the word experts consciously) addressing themselves to this concern is extremely limited compared to the number of economists, computer scientists, sociologists and other specialists that our universities produce. From that perspective I wish to congratulate the organizers of

this National Seminar.

Considerable work has been done across the globe in this subject some of which is contradictory. The area of language development of revitalization, particularly in the context of tribal communities is a vast subject. We are all here to listen to each other and to share our experiences, our knowledge, and our wisdom in thoughtful and practical ways, issues of linguistic and cultural diversity in planning for education are complex and as an educator, I have sat in fora where we have had to deal with practical issues.

Having worked in some of the tribal regions of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Ladakh my effort will be to share an understanding, express some concerns and flag issues for debate and discussion.

Use of the word "tribe"

Several anthropologists have argued that the term "tribe" was introduced to describe people who were different from mainstream civilization and also by the colonial rulers to categorize the diversity and heterogeneity of people. The physical and linguistic traits, demographic size, ecological conditions of living and cultural beliefs and practices of these people varied widely. Xaxa (2006), argues that the need for such a category was necessitated both by the concern to subsume the enormous diversity existing into neat and meaningful categories for classificatory purposes as well as for administrative expediency.

Hence although the tribe as a category and as a point of reference may be treated as a colonial construction, the image and meaning underlying the category constructed by the so-called civilized of group and communities that came to be designated as 'tribe' is of equal significance. The term tribe

since the 16th century has referred to groups/communities, which lived in primitive conditions of living. It is another matter that ecologists are increasingly advocating these ways of living as environmentally sensitive.

In any case the issue of the "other" comes into play in relation to the Tribe peoples. The creates a hierarchy between and amongst peoples of a particular nation. Most often than not the hierarchy is based on the value of economic status and political positioning in society. The mention of Tribal peoples is automatically viewed by dominant communities as the marginalized or those of the lower strata of society.

Having problematic the word tribe, I move on to the significance of language and its relationship with culture.

Significance of language :

Language expresses relation of power: The kind of expressions used, the dialect employed, the accent, intonation and vocabulary convey position, position in a social hierarchy. They convey rules of who possesses authority and how it is used. Words can be used as instrument of coercion and constraint, as tools of intimidation and abuse, as signs of politeness, condescension and contempt. Bourdieu's general "theory of practice" portrays everyday linguistic exchanges as situated encounters between agents endowed with socially structured resources and competencies which, in myriad ways expresses and reproduces the social structure.

Language thus, is a social-historical phenomenon and conditions of production and reception of texts are as important as the texts themselves. A completely homogeneous language or speech community does not exist in reality: it is an idealization of specific linguistic practices which emerged historically. There are bound to be differences across regions and across time.

The idea of dominant and legitimate language, it is now well-accepted, is often that of the "victorious" (as in the colonial rule) which assumes the status of the official language and is associated with the phenomena of "destruction of instruments of expressions".

Since language plays a crucial role in socialization, the social context "the habitus" or a set of dispositions also reinforces and communicates certain acts, beliefs, attitudes. Language orients the "dispositions" of an agent to act/ react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes that seem 'regular'. These are inculcated, structured, generative and transposable and are 'embedded' or entrenched with a culture. The 'essence' is a collective belief and tradition in the consciousness of the people who make up a community. Thus a change in language necessarily affects a large portion of the community's ways of living.

Examining the instrumentality of language, there are communities that view language as a tool or skill. Such communities may use different 'tools' (languages) for different purposes, for example, using a particular language for business or to establish linkages or associating one language with leisure activities or as a library language or a religious language or using it as the medium of mass communication. These societies are often (but not necessarily always) unable to be passionate enough about their language to use it as an instrument of nation-building. Singapore with its four national language communities offers a picture that comes closer to this kind of postulation. Here we find a number of interesting strategies being used, including cultivation of new country-internal norms such as Singlish. This is because language and culture are highly entwined.

Language and Culture :

Languages and cultures are products of many hundreds, and in some cases, thousands, of generations of people living and learning together. Jerome Bruner (a foremost pioneer in cognitive development and educational psychology) states that "...culture shapes mind, ... it provides us with the toolkit by which we construct not only our worlds but our very conceptions of our selves and our powers." He further states that "... you cannot understand mental activity unless you take into account the cultural setting and its resources, the very things that give mind its shape and scope. Learning, remembering, talking, imagining : all of them are made possible by participating in a culture." Literature suggests that knowing, understanding, and appreciating one's cultural base are necessary starting points for initiating a young child's formal education. From a tribal and professional perspective of an educationist, the creation of lifelong learning environments and meaningful educational experience for both the youth and adults of a tribal community requires a language and cultural context that supports the traditions, knowledge, and language(s) of the community as the starting place for learning new ideas and knowledge. There is a firm belief within many native tribal communities and professional educators that this cultural context is absolutely essential if one is to succeed academically and to build a meaningful life as adults.

It is well known that tribals in many parts of the world went to boarding schools, where they were beaten for speaking their languages. That generation did not teach their children or grandchildren their native language because they didn't want them to suffer the same humiliation.

In India and many other South Asian countries distortions in languages and in its understanding/ orientation were created

by the high caste, ruling classes of India, and by the arrival of western researchers (colonial rule). Even today, speaking English is typically viewed as a sign of 'progress' which has several consequences.

Languages and region formation in India :

Language has worked as a factor in making of 'Nation' as well as 'Regions' and India represents this fact. After independence, we recognized ourselves into 'linguistic' states from 1956 onwards, and the states were reduced from a total of 27 to 14. Later, seven states were created from North Eastern Frontier Area with its numerous minority groups. By 2003, with the addition of Jharkhand, Uttaranchal and Chattishgarh, with their many tribal speech communities, there are as many states as there had been earlier. With creation of several autonomous regions and eight Union Territories, the challenge of language planning has emerged as a complicated issue. In addition, a number of complex political economic and cultural factors created what was called a 'Sunflower syndrome' (Singh 1990) - a mutual dislike among competing languages and mother tongues and the matter has only worsened because of lack of dialogue and a severe insurgency problem. Across other developing nations, several causes of the territorial organizations need to be reorganized which are entwined with politics of identity, language and self assertion:

For example territorial divisions effected by colonial rulers has had a lasting impact on India and Pakistan. Serbia is an example of dismembering of a nation-state because of internal political dissensions and prolonged war (Serbia). Protestations (fallout of CNRT activities in East Timor). Geopolitical unification of Germany, Novel identity-formation as in Tanzania < Tanganyika & Zanzibar. Religious-historical belief creating a territorial entity as in Israel. Or Self-

determination or plebiscite as in Kashmir.

A significant aspect of these socio-political in multilingual nations is conflict resolution which has become the biggest challenge. This is because, very often contradictory forces operate through which human aggregates of a region attempt self-definition. While the factor of ethnicity prompts them to press for self-identity, the pressure of civic society teaches them to keep this feeling subdued. Further, when a country opens up to foreign trade, immigration, etc. it has no other option than to adhere to global narratives of liberal universalism. Thus, as suggested by Uday Narayan Singh Globalism vs. Localism becomes an important point of debate.

Majority groups are those without much bargaining power because of sheer lack of numerical strength or economic clout. The patterns to tensions between majority and minority groups emerge out of specific ethnic conditions (Schermerhorn 1970.) Further, it is often argued that cleavage between compromise and control create great differences. At the core of the Control theory is the plan that a majority ethnicity will try translating differences by adopting a system to control both values and resources of the minorities. This process is implicit in any majority-minority relationship, especially when there are great ethnic divisions. This brings us to the question of linguistic genocide and linguistic rights.

Linguistic genocide

Linguistic and cultural human rights are necessary to prevent ethnic and linguistic genocide (Kangas, 1999). Absence of minority languages from school curricula, thus making them unimportant, insignificant, morbid and invisible can lead to death of a language. Sometimes, when the minority mother tongues are construed as non-resources and the majority language as the only valued linguistic resources, the minority

language is abandoned on the plea that it is in the interest of the minority children. The children in such cases acquire the majority language, sacrificing their human rights to preserve, maintain and develop their mother tongue.

Linguistic genocide is defined as prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools or for the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group. Prohibition can, of course, be overt and direct, or covert and indirect, accomplished via ideological and structural means (Capotorti, 1979).

In the preparatory work for International Convention for the prevention and punishment of crime of genocide by UN in 1948 the term *linguistic genocide* first appeared. Linguistically argued racism or linguisticism is more sophisticated but equally efficient weapons as biological racism is, in committing ethnocide (ethnic genocide, the destruction of the ethnic sociocultural identity of a group) and linguistic genocide.

Focusing on this concern, the fact that the rich variety of ethnic languages and cultures are in danger of disappearing completely must be recognized. Educators and policy makers need to address the language and education issues that, in many cases, have forced ethnic minority communities to sacrifice their heritage languages and cultures in order to succeed in the majority society or to even have real choices for development" accessing their entitlements as citizens of a nation.

Staudt (1991:28-29) in his work 'Managing Development' argues that "Development is constructed as 'a process of enlarging people's choices'; of enhancing 'participatory democratic processes' and the 'ability of people to have a say in the decisions that shape their lives'; of providing 'human being with the opportunity to develop their fullest potential' and of enabling the poor, women and 'free describing

independent peasants' to organize for themselves and work together.

All civil societies should ideally be interested in, if not committed to, protection of language rights of the ever-diminishing minorities. Linguistic human right includes the right for a minority to exist, and this presupposes learning both first and second languages fully. It is a linguistic human right to learn one's mother tongue fully and also to learn an official language fully. The issue of linguistic rights has utmost relevance for tribal group where cultural diversity seems to be diminishing.

Tribal languages : Loss of Diversity and Implications

Earl Shorris (2000) presents an interesting example of the meaning of language death in an article (entitled "The Last Word" in the August 2000 issue of *Harper's Magazine*). He writes that only a living language- of all the human arts and sciences-can "describe a unique and irreplaceable world". He goes on to describe a personal experience in the rain forests of southern Mexico when a brilliantly blue butterfly settled close by, prompting the following reflection.

There are nine different words in Maya for the colour blue in the comprehensive Porrua Spanish Maya Dictionary but just three Spanish translations, leaving six butterflies that can only be seen by the Maya, proving beyond doubt that when a language dies six butterflies disappear from the consciousness of the earth. (Shorris,2000,p.43)

The average Mayan-speaker is not conscious of more than three different blue butterflies. The possibility that there are other, perhaps related, indigenous language groups who may have a vocabulary adequate for the nine blue Mayan butterflies is real. Nevertheless, the author makes a telling point that minority languages provide a vocabulary capable of

the diversity they know in their own environment that cannot be easily adequately described by any replacement language.

According to the Endangered Language Fund at Yale University, less than half of the more than 6,000 languages currently spoken in the world are likely to survive to the next century. The possibility that 90% of the World's languages will disappear, is a prediction about which we are all rightly disturbed. This kind of language loss is a major concern as there has already been erosion of multilingual base in countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA.

The Indian context presents a scenario which is perhaps known to most of the experts gathered here. There are more than 1652 mother tongues, genetically belonging to five different language families. The 1991 Census had 10,400 raw returns which were rationalized into 1576 mother tongues. They are further rationalized into 216 mother tongues, and grouped under 114 languages: Austro-Asiatic (14 languages, with a total population of 1.13%), Dravidian (17 languages, with a total population of 22.53%), Indo-European (Indo-Aryan, 19 languages, with a total population of 75.28%, and Germanic, 1 language, with a total population of 0.02%), Semito-Harmitic (1 language, with a total population of 0.01%), and Tibeto-Burman (62 languages with a total population of 0.97%).

In all this, the problem of unclassified languages must be noted. Mother tongues having a population of less than 10,000 on all India basis or "not possible to identity" on the basis of available linguistic information have gone under 'others'. So, a good number of "languages" recorded in the Indian Census could not be classified as to their genetic relation, and so are treated as Unclassified Languages. The Indo-Aryan languages are spoken by the maximum number of speakers, followed in the descending order by the Dravidian, Austro-

Asiatic, and Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman) languages.

From amongst these, only about 60 to 70 languages are taught in schools, either as subject or as media of instruction. Further, there are 3,954 newspapers and periodicals in 35 languages with varying degrees of regularity and readership. Similarly there are only 146 speech varieties and 24 "major languages" used in radio networks.

Language Policy in India :

One of the biggest problems is that the language policy of the country does not even take cognizance of all the 1652 spoken languages and thereby empowers certain languages and marginalizes others. This has inadvertently unleashed disruptive and divisive forces in India, language has moved from a socio-cultural reservoir and a communicative force into a political issue. Similarly the three-language formula ignores the minority languages. In every state, 30 to 40 percent of its population speak minority languages, which can be divided into three categories:

Tribal dialects -Minor languages like Bundelkhandi, Bhojpuri, Maghai etc. within the States-Major languages of India which happen to be minority languages in a particular state like Marathi or Tamil in Karnataka or Urdu in Uttar Pradesh. These are issues that we need to address ourselves to. We are all too familiar with the fact that *differentiating between a language and dialect is often a political issue.*

Although the Indian constitution gives minorities, including linguistic minorities, the right to establish and manage educational institution for their advantage including the preservation of their culture. Many communities and the tribals do not make use of the constitutional provisions. It has been argued by many that the State must provide a place for

education in minority languages as a principle of pedagogy or preservation of linguistic human rights. As many tribals are not aware of their rights, the demand to use minority mother tongue as medium in school education is largely to get the mother tongue a statutory status symbolically and not to make use of it for the education of the minority children (Annamalai,2001).

On the other hand the dangers contained in streamlining the tribal peoples, in the name of development and modernization, either via assimilation/integration processes are well known. More often than not the native languages have been compromised wherein, the education system of the dominant culture imposes the dominant languages as the means of communication and basis of the national syllabus of education.

Language Curriculum and Achievement of Tribals

Some scholars and researchers argue that the present system of language curriculum is one of the major reasons for low educational achievements of the tribals. The dominant language of the state, often presented as the norm or standard, value based, culturally superior, powerful and resourceful. It is also emphasized in so many ways that the tribal child must this language in order to assimilate with the mainstream. This ultimately generates among the tribal children a feeling of inferiority towards themselves, their language, culture and their own parents and family. Lack of school-related parental support, family pattern, gender roles, family insistence on the tribal child for active involvement as a labour force in the agricultural work also contribute to school dropout rate.

Although the Constitution guarantees the tribals right to preserve or develop their language, such guarantees cannot become a reality until these languages are used in education,

administration and in mass media. In order to protect their linguistic rights, all the tribal languages of the state need to be developed. Their script, dictionary, and other study materials need to be developed. New planning must be made to make the tribals well versed in their native language (both orally and in written form), while enabling them at the same time to learn the other languages.

Issues for discussion:

1. Who decides what is defined as culture? Scholars and academic have placed emphasis on certain aspects of India and believe they have a proper understanding of Indian cultural history. It is generally believed that all of India's accomplishments are contribution by the Northern Aryan cultural. However, in order to gain a closer understanding of a culture, historians and anthropologists must look for sources, which are not necessarily in the forefront (Vikas Maholtra). A Focus on subaltern studies is very relevant here. Do we have sufficient understanding of all the diverse tribal groups in India?

2. Reflecting on Contradictory or Partial Approaches:

Our systems sometimes deliver, for example, economic capital in the form of social welfare or charity, but not jobs or education; or if education is provided health and livelihoods are ignored; when jobs are available, welfare and health infrastructure may be missing. In the case of indigenous communities, education and 'alphabetise' are delivered one hand while on the other hand, other policies actually accelerate the deterioration of the communities' kinship structure, traditional values and forms of work by way of private sector investment and resultant displacement in the name of development. In such scenario, indigenous communities, linguistic minorities, diasporic communities and others are often blamed for having 'squandered' or abused 'government

handouts' and other resources made available (George Monbiot). There is a need to foster a more holistic approach to concerns of tribals.

3. Linked to this, it is observed that while some people and communities enter easily and profitably into new ways of gaining and applying knowledge, other communities, especially minority language communities, are being left out, perhaps even forced out, to positions on the periphery of progress. What kinds of strategies are needed to prevent this?

4. Cultural Globalization :

The issue emerging from the caption, "one world, one dictionary," by Bill Gates when he launched Microsoft's Encarta World Dictionary, seems just a generation away. Such a thought alarms linguists and anthropologists. If diversity is an underlying need for successful humanity, then the preservation of linguistic diversity is essential, for "language lies at the heart of what it is to be human. Every language that disappears for good is likely to take a culture with it." And not just a culture, but also an irreplaceable storehouse of knowledge, particularly about the natural world. (Richard Morrison).

5.Challenges of Monolingualism:

Developed countries are perceived as monolingual states because they tend to become dominantly monolingual in view of their acceptance of a model of developmental culture, which is effective only in a situation of monolingualism. Thus the multi-lingualism of the entire third world is envisaged as problematic particularly when developmental culture is viewed from the perspective of the developed world. For example, the multiplicity of languages, religions and races is regarded as leading to fragmentation from the western point of view but it is, in fact, giving importance to every part of the whole and

preventing the elimination of human beings and specific races. Rather, any monolithic structure will lead to destruction of life, of culture, and of knowledge undermining the unity of living.

6. Tribal Languages would possess the power of negotiation only when they are supported by political influence and economic power. Even in terms of business opportunity or scholarships for higher levels of education, Only those with the right and influential connections are in better positions access the system.

7. **Some Pointers :** Language development, language revitalization and multilingual education are relatively new terms to scholarly research, civil society interest, and governmental involvement. All three terms have gained increasing recognition in the past twenty years. The concerns, needs and contributions of minority language groups need to be addressed while there is still time to do something about them.

Experiments across the world point to several approaches. David Bradley shows in the context of Yi and Lisu, that there are ethno-linguistic minorities who have successfully braved the great challenges to maintain and promote their languages by linking the languages with education.

Creating a dictionary and grammar reference guide of language, as well as similar materials for teaching is yet another important aspect. Some believe that the best way to get good grammatical detail is to have the native speakers of a languages tell a story. it is useful to gather and record not just traditional folk tales and oral history stories, but also songs for different types of occasions, specs and anecdotes. Listening to them, you capture words that a cultural linguist would not have thought of gathering. Learning tribal languages is more than learning a subject: It conveys the world view and culture of

the people who speak it.

Another suggestion is to offer instruction to students in the schools, the as well as offer adult language classes funding for schools to develop culturally based curriculum; support for increasing the number of teachers and other professionals sensitive to issue of the need to develop tribal language and cultural programs; and create opportunities for active, meaningful parental participation.

Ways to improve educational opportunities for tribal children must be devised and examined through a process of monitoring. Lack of teachers may be issues in some region. Absence of cultural consciousness and sensitivity unfamiliarity with language amongst teachers may be yet another issue.

We need systematic research to examine the nature of relationship between a culturally based educational curriculum and improved academic performance. Some linguists propose that since the oral history stories are never written down by the tribal elders, they are in danger of vanishing completely unless younger tribal members learned enough to understand them. They are a very important.

Building demonstration programs and for the experimentation of new ideas for educating tribal children must be encouraged. For example, one suggestion is to create computer games for teaching the language to elementary and high school students. In one game, students hear a word and try to match a symbol on the screen to that word while the computer keeps score. They also click on a letter in the language to hear the sound of that letter. Some experts believe that the computer gives the learner feedback without criticism. It is a better method for learning a language than flashcards because it trains students' ears to hear unusual sounds.

Similarly recognizing the ability of the Irula community to identify various medicinal plants and prepare cures for ailments by documenting their traditional wisdom and /or organising exhibitions is yet another dimension of preserving cultural heritage.

It is also important to discuss issues of language right with a concentration on environment right of tribes, the place of the arts in tribal society and intellectual property rights. The combined knowledge from educationists, anthropologists and sociologists as well as practitioners could work jointly at addressing some of these concerns. Sharing, describing and analysing experiences in developing written forms for languages that have been unwritten until now would be extremely useful. The nature of the danger that faces us to retain linguistic and cultural diversity requires extensive collaborations.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, one of the fundamental challenges is how to create lifelong learning opportunities that allow all the numbers to improve their quality of life, and to meet their tribal responsibilities through meaningful contributions to the local, national, and world communities in which they live and interact. The greatest educational challenge for many is to build learning environments that allow each of their young children to obtain an education "creates good people that are knowledgeable and wise."

In order to do this we need to re-evaluate our approach to understanding the nature of conflicts and tensions that have to do with language, race and ethnicity. We also have to reassess how we could possibly relate them to nation-building. In case of problems with language development, which is further compounded by prejudice, our attention is mostly attracted

towards the neglect of structural and socialite conditions affecting race and ethnic relations. Prejudice and discrimination should be viewed as dependent and intervening variables. The role that the victims can and are willing to play in language revitalization and preservation activities must be clearly stated because the success of the efforts depends crucially on the group for which the plan is intended. Reshaping and rethinking of group relations is very important in the contemporary context. I am sure that all of you here will discuss debate and perhaps even argue about the necessity, possibility and urgency of development of tribal languages.

There cannot be a last word on such a complex theme but I do hope that this National Seminar will contribute in a positive way toward the development of regions in which languages and cultures can be seen, not as a problem but as a rich resource and a basic human right, essential for survival of life and the long term ecological sustain-ability.



An elderly tribal couple take their time out to enjoy hookah.

5

Kok Borok-People's Language

R.K. Acharyya

'K Kok Borok' is the mother tongue of Borok Race of Tripura. There is no question about its ancient. From time origin immemorial Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Uchai, Rupini, Kolai and Murasing speak this language. Linguistically Kok Borok is a Mongolian Language which is most akin to language spoken by the tribal races of Tibet & Burma and this is the only reason for which Kok Borok is known to be as Mongoloid origin and sister language of Tibeto-Burman family.

This Princely State of Tripura have seen 184 Kings belonging to Borok Race. But from generation to generation the kings, their families and kings' executives had to mix with people outside their communities. The reason thereby, they did not popularise their mother tongue Kok Borok among other communities rather they adopted Language of other communities and patronised those with great satisfaction & practice. However from the last part of 18th Century Kok Borok, the mother tongue of eight tribal communities began to enrich and popularise among the speaker communities with

self identity and self reliance. So language work actually started from the work of Doulat Ahamed during 1897 A.D. He was by profession a Lawyer. He wrote a Kok Borok book in Bengali Script named as Kok Boroma. This was a primary Kok Borok Book for basic learning on the language. This work was recognised in Royal Court of Tripura. The contemporary, Thakur Radha Mohan Debbarma, a member of the Royal Court was there after taken the responsibility to prepare more exhaustive book on Kok Borok. In true sense literal work on Kok Borok was started from that time. The then king of Tripura gave responsibility to Thakur Radha Mohan for taking all steps for educational growth among the hill tribes of Tripura. Radha Mohan observed that eight communities among the tribal subjects speak almost similar dialect in between themselves and can understand each other. Therefore he has given the name of these dialects to a single nomenclature known as "Kok-Borok". This was really very much scientific from linguistic point of view for which people in general accepted it. Even well known Anthropologists, scholars, Linguists of the country accepted the term Kok Borok as a single Language of eight major tribal Communities of Tripura. Radhamohan wrote many children books, short stories and some translation works in Kok Borok. He used Bengali Script for his writings which was a Landmark for Kok Borok Language.

After Radhamohan, another writer Sri Alindra Lal Tripura worked in Kok Borok. He wrote many books, organised seminar, workshop on Kokborok Language for its overall development and awareness among the user community. But till then few literate persons only from Deb Barma community came forward with his mission. Sri Alindra Lal Tripura has also attempted to prepare a separate Script. for Kok Borok like Burmese Script though it was not used and accepted from any

The meaningful work in Kok Borok was started from late seventies. During that time Sri Kumud Kundu Chowdhury a linguist who came from West Bengal and settled in Tripura started basic work of Kok Borok Language. The glorious moment for this language was its recognition by the State govt. as official language on 19th January 1979 . A bill was passed in the house of Tripura Assembly recognising this language. People of all the communities were inspired. Since then towards Kokborok had to face ups and downs but still progressing its own destination. Literal works, terminology, dictionaries, short stories, novels, poems, newspapers etc are enriching this language. Many more people are coming forward with new thought to improve this language. Renowned person, who have contributed for this language are Chandra Kanta Murasing who got Sahitya Academy Award. Sri Shyam Lal Debbarma, Dasarath Deb, Naresh Chandra Debbarma, Rabindra Kishore Debbarma and others. Not only that some Bangalee writers e.g. Nitai Acharya, Santimoy Chakraborty, Monoranjan Mazumder etc. also contributed a lot to improve this language. But the most unfortunate issue before Kok Borok is now the script . Tribalism encroached on this language now. They are few but not to be ignored. What they want? Their demand is to implement Roman Script for Kok Borok. They also put reasons. May be there are some points but the historical process that are being followed for last 100 years using Bengali Script was unscientific? Not at all. The eminent scholar of Linguistics Prof. Suha Chatterjee mentioned that Bengali Script by way of changing some sign and tune & tone would be the best possible script for Kok Borok. He practically showed the formula and in later time Late Dasarath Deb exercised on the script issue in Bengali. He wrote a comprehensive book and is being treated as the primary book on Kokborok. Presently writers like Sri Shyam Lal Debbarma, Naresh

corner.

Debbarma, Chandrakanta Murasing, Rabindra Kishore Debbarma, and others are still contributing all sorts of literary works in Bengali Script. Above all, Tripura is a State in the extreme North East part of India. The tribals in this State are living in coexistence with Bengalees. So it is essential to create a social environment so that people in general can learn Kok Borok as like as mother tongue. The advanced community and their Language always grabs small language and culture of minority communities. Once it deemed Kok Borok it self was a dead language. The speaking communities of this language had also no awareness, basic education or even script of their language. But presently Kok Borok is a State language. Hence massive use of this language in every sphere of social life is required. Steps also need to be taken to adopt Kok Borok as medium of instruction from primary school to University level. For this purpose irrespective of differences all should come forward to contribute the best to enrich Kok Borok.

Script controversy may be there but all possible steps need to be taken to introduce Kok Borok as a vernacular subject in each & every primary school beside Bengali at a ratio of 50:50 for proses, poetry, stories, short essay & grammar. This is absolutely necessary for a state like Tripura where in tribal and Bangalees are interdependent in all sphere of life. Once this is done, people of Tripura will get a new generation who will promote an actual mixed culture in the state. Because what is going on today is fake and fade.

We are the witness of thousands of ventures in the state where in tribal & non-tribal intellectuals give lecture on the stage for language development, cultural upliftment and so on. In seminar workshop organised speakers express the same word "need to be done". But no step actually is being taken

from any corner.

As such, government is the appropriate authority to take initiative to introduce Kok Borok from primary level. All the Kok Borok knowing tribal primary teachers and non-tribal Bengali teachers could be given Kok Borok language teaching course for six months to take classes from class I to class V. Course content for Kok Borok could be selected from existing published primary books in Kok Borok. A committee may frame the syllabus from class VI to Class X and for XI to XII. After the Higher Secondary, student may choose either Kok Borok or Bangalee as their vernacular subject at degree level. From our experience it is seen that there are hundreds of graduate Bengali teachers who are basically tribals and Kok Borok is their mother tongue. Similarly Bengali teachers having graduate degree may be given Kok Borok language course for teaching Kok Borok. In B.Ed. Course primary learning course should be imparted. 2ndly those who are regularly practising Kok Borok to bring out small stories, poem, and other literary works may be given all supports from the govt. and social bodies for publication. 3rdly it is being observed that other than Tripuris few members of other Kok Borok speaking communities coming forward to develop their own mother tongue. The literary group of Uchai, Reang, Kolai, Rupini, Murasing, shall be taken in the process of development of their mother tongue.

Kok Borok is a rich language. It has a storehouse of every resources to establish it as a rich Indian language. All of us should therefore come forward to contribute and to enrich the language. In conclusion I must mention that all of us are passing modern age. The very word "Need To Be Done"-is now a back dated phenomenon. Let Kok Borok grow as like as mother tongue of thirty three lakhs of people residing in Tripura.

We must not forget that KokBorok is not only a tribal language - it is our own language. Govt. Action : 1) To introduce kokborok in each & every primary school inducting syllabus at a ratio of 50:50 basis with Bengali by 2007-08 academic session and continue it step by step upto university level. 2) To set up Text Book preparatory committees i) one for class I to VIII ii) one for class IX-XII. iii) graduate/Honours graduate level and fourth one is absolutely for Master Degree Course. 3) Organising of seminar and workshop and stress for publication of Kok Borok book/general/periodical.



*Tribal women
carrying fuel
woods from far
flung areas in the
interior areas of
Tripura.*

*Tribal woman
carries
drinking
water.*



6

A PROFILE OF THE BORO LANGUAGE : SOME ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Anil Boro

Introduction : The Boro language is a language of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino Tibetan Family. Like other languages of the TB branch, the Boro language may also be considered as a tribal language; but in linguistic terminology there is not a categorization as a tribal language. A Tribal language is the language in India spoken by any one of the ethnic groups who are scheduled in the category of Tribe [ST]. What Annamalai says is relevant here:

Tribe commonly called Scheduled Tribe in the Indian context is an administrative and legal term to label some ethnic groups based on their socio economic status and religious cultural customs in order to give special attention to them as mandated by the Constitution (Annamalai 1990).

The multilingual and multi-cultural situation in India is such that the tribal languages have had to face a good number of challenges through the ages. So to say the multilingual and

bilingual situation in which the tribal languages are spoken greatly determine their condition. As these languages are not important in the social, cultural, educational, spiritual and political domains they do not enjoy the status of the majority languages. The literacy rate among them is far below the national average. In most cases they are bilingual or monolingual, where they do not even have the working knowledge or communication skill in the regional language which is generally the lingua franca or the medium of instruction. In most cases they are invaded by the outsiders in their political, economic and cultural spheres. Though they are numerically majority they are turned into minority under regional pressures. And finally they are discriminated again by non-recognition of their linguistic and cultural identity. Their language does not find enough space in the mass media except few minutes' entertainment program. At one time the tribal language speakers were ridiculed by the speakers of the majority languages and very often they were abused in derogatory terms. The bilingual linguistic situation where they live is mostly unidirectional. [Reddy:2000:45-58]

The language spoken by the Boros, a major ethnic and tribal group widely scattered throughout Assam, Bengal and the rest of North Eastern States is known as Bodo or Boro language. A majority of the speakers and writers write it as Bodo instead of Boro (Assamese spelling, ৰোডো). The Meches of Goalpara and Bengal are also the speakers of the same Bodo language with dialectal variation.

Statistical and Geographical account :

The language is spoken in widely spread geographical areas of Assam, North Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal. But the majority of Boro speakers are concentrated in Northern and Southern bank of the Brahmaputra in Assam.

Following are the areas of concentration of Boro speakers in the Northern Tract:

(a) North and Eastern parts of Dhubri district, the whole of Kokrajhar district and parts of Goalpara and Bongaigaon (at present Chirang) district. (b) Northern parts of Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup (at present Baga district) districts. (c) Northern parts of Darrang, SANITPUR, North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. These areas of concentration in the Northern tract is over an area of approximately 10,000 square km and more than 20 lakhs of Boro speaking people inhabited in the region. Concentration of Boro speakers in the Southern tract are: (a) Dhubri and Dhupdhara area in Goalpara district. (b) Boko Chaygaon and Rani Areas South Guwahati-Sonapur-Khetri area of Kamrup District. (c) Jagiroad- Morigaon area in Morigaon district (d) Southern most part of Sibsagar district. (e) Howraghat- Lamding area of Karbi Anglong. (f) North eastern part of Dibrugarh District areas of Boro Settlement in the neighbouring States of Meghalaya, Nagaland and West Bengal area are: (a) Tikrikilla area of Garo Hills in the State of Meghalaya. (b) Dimapur area in Nagaland. (c) Northern part of Jalpaiguri in West Bengal.

Language corpus and affinities:

The Boro language belongs to the Bodo group (Boro-Garo) of the TB sub branch of the ST family. The language of the Bodo group are Boro, Mech, Rabha, Tipra (Kok Borok), Garo, Dimasa, Tiwa and Koch according to Shafer, Bodo-Naga belongs to the same sub-branch Baric. Chatterjee has identified this sub-group as Bodo-Naga (Under Assam Burma group), Grierson has called this group as Assam Burmese under which comes Bodo-Naga and Burmese-Kuki-Chin-Kachin and Lolo group. Benedict and others have used the term Boro-Garo to identify the closely related languages like Boro, Garo, Dimasa,

Tipra, Tiwa, Rabha and so on. The language shares some common features in respect of vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax with the other sister and allied languages of Bodo group. Endle characterizes the language as "agglutinative as distinct from the inflectional family of languages".

Script and Spelling:

The Boro language is an ancient language of the Bodo group; but it did not have its written literature and hence there is no script of its own until recent past. The Christian Missionaries who first collected and published the folk tales, songs, sayings etc. of the language used the Roman Script. When the native speakers published the first book and journals since 1915 they used the Bangla and Assamese Scripts. When the Boro language was introduced in the primary and secondary schools as medium of instruction (in 1963 and 1968 respectively) the text books and other reference books in the language were written in Assamese script. When the ethnicity movement gathered momentum as the Boros launched movement for a separate State of their own, they opted for a switch over to the Roman Script. Since 1974 there was a agitation for recognition of the Roman Script for which 18 Boro youths had to sacrifice their lives and thousands were sent to the prison and hundreds were crippled and wounded and tortured.

The movement for recognition of the Roman Script came to a tragic halt when the Central Govt. called the leaders of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and convinced them into giving up the demand for the time being and accepting Devnagari Script. Since then Devnagari Script has been used with some variations and alterations to suit the spelling system. The language has a tonal character which has not been properly taken note of while

adopting an alien script for it. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha and its leaders, Bodo authors and linguists are endeavouring to standardize the spelling system of the language which has become more simplified after switching over to the Devnagari Script.

The letter *i* is used for the articulation of high front unrounded vowel. The sign */w/* is used for the articulation of high back unrounded vowel. The letter */s/* is used for articulation of voiceless alveolar inspiredly fricative sound. Other letters like */c/ /ch/*, */s/* are not used except in case of loan words.

Published literature:

The Boro language did not have a tradition of written literature before the second decade of the twentieth century. The Missionaries who penetrated the Boro speaking area for the missionary work published some books on religion, tales, rhymes, songs and grammar. They wrote books mostly in English with examples in the Boro language. The most noteworthy contributions were the book on Grammar by Sidney Endle (1884) and the monograph on the ethnic community (1911). Anderson's collection of Folktales and Rhymes (1895) is equally of seminal significance as it unfolded the hidden treasure of Boro folklore to the world. But Boro literature proper came out as and when the native speakers became conscious about the significance of writing culture. The religious and social reform movement led by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma in the first decade of the last century created an awareness among the people. The first magazine *Bibar* was published in 1920. Already a book on Boro customary laws was published in 1915. Two collections of Boro poems by M.R. Brahma and Rupnath Brahma, jointly with M.R. Brahma (verse and hymns) were published in 1923 and 1926.

Magazines like *Hathorkhi Hala*, *Alongbar* (1938) were published. Genre of literatures like essay, story and drama equally drew the attention of the authors. The essays and critical writings on social issues were directed towards the necessity of social reform and social awareness. A good number of Bodo plays were written or adapted or translated from Bengali plays to be staged on the open air theatre in the remote villages. The plays thus staged in the open air stage aimed at social reform and creating awareness among the Bodos. Dramatists like Dwarendra Basumatary, Satish Basumatary, Umesh Ch. Mosahary, Modaram Brahma wrote social, historical and fictions plays to be performed on the open air stage. These plays endeavoured to transform their plays into a strong instrument of social reform.

The modern period in Bodo literature coincides with the formation of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in 1952. The search for identity assumed a concrete shape and the Bodo language was introduced as the medium of instruction in the primary stage in 1963 and in the secondary stage in 1968. Gradually the number of books published went on increasing by leaps and bounds. Poets and authors devoted themselves to the writing of poems, short stories, novels, biography, literary criticism and so on. Some authors took great interest in the collection and printing of oral tales, songs, and proverbs. The poets and authors of this period were greatly influenced by the literary traditions of Bangla and Asomiya literature. The literature of the period is characterized by novelty, variety and search for new technique and modes of expression. Poets like Prasenjit Brahma, Jagadish Brahma, S. Brahma Chowdhury, Brajendra Kr. Brahma, Surath Narzary and others have immensely contributed to enrich the mainstream of modern Bodo poetry. Novelists like Chittaranjan Mosahary, M.R. Lahary,

Dharanidhar Wary, Nandeswar Daimary, Kanteswar Brahma, Katindra Swargiary have written the best novels on the social and cultural life of the Bodos. Although the Bodo novel is still in its infancy, the Bodo Short Story has made much headway. Among the Bodo short story writers Ishan Moshahary, Nilkamal Brahma, M.R. Lahary, Dharani Wary, Prasenjit Brahma, Haribhusan Brahma, Nandeswar Daimary have written the best ever stories with a consciousness equally for social realism and the technique of the story telling. A galaxy of authors and essayists have taken to writing essays and literary criticism. Among them Mohini Mohan Brahma, Ramdas Basumatary, Kamal Kr. Brahma, Madhu Ram Boro, M.R. Lahary, Brajendra Kr. Brahma, Lakhyeswar Brahma, Kanakeswar Brahma and others may be mentioned. A group of enthusiastic authors have taken to writing children's literature, travelogue and biography in Bodo language. The number of journals is on the increase; but the majorities of them are short lived. The number of modern plays is very few. Dramatists like Kamal Kr. Brahma, Mongal Singh Hajowary, M.R. Lahary, Janak Jhankar Narzary have written social plays. Younger authors and poets who started their career after 1980's or 1990's have enriched the contemporary Bodo literature. Poets like Aurobindo Uzir, Binoy Baglary, Anju, Anil Boro, Soroj Bwismutiary, Bisnujyoti and many others have composed the finest poems. In their poetry there is a conscious attempt to experiment the use of poetic language and rhythm. Among them there are a few who have rejuvenated the narrative verse in the tradition of medieval Kavya literature. Of them Bihuram Boro deserves special mention. The age of Bodo written literature is hardly ninety years. In this short span, the literature written and published in

the Bodo language has come up as an emerging force in the whole of North East India.

**BODO LANGUAGES AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION :
(COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY).**

The Boro language was introduced as a medium of instruction in the primary stage of education in Assam in 1963. Then it was introduced as the medium of instruction in the secondary stage in 1968. Since then the language is being gainfully employed in the Primary and Secondary stage as the medium of instruction in the schools located in Boro dominated areas or areas with substantial Boro population.

The language was then recognized as a Modern Indian Language for teaching in the Colleges under undergraduate course of Gauhati University, North East Hill University and Dibrugarh University. Now the Boro language - literature course is taught both as MIL and Elective Subject in the Colleges. Major course in the undergraduate level is shortly to be introduced. Already postgraduate degree course for Boro had been introduced in the University of Gauhati way back in 1996, (besides the Diploma and Certificate course) at the Kokrajhar campus of Gauhati University. Recently the language was introduced as an elective subject [language subject] for the All India civil services entrance examination.

Bodo Language : As in electronic media :

The Boro language is effectively used in the modern mass communication media too. The Gauhati Centre of All India Radio broadcasts 45 minute Boro programmes in the afternoon section which include programmes of news item, songs, poetry recitation, short radio play, speech on important

social, national issues and current programmes and features etc. Similarly there is a transmission centre at Kokrajhar that provides wider scope for the broadcast of Boro programmes. The Guwahati Centre of Door Darshan provides some space for telecast of Boro folk songs, modern songs and dance programmes. The NE Channels launched only recently from Gauhati telecast Boro news at 6 p.m and 7:15 a.m. The Tura Centre of DDK also telecasts programmes on Boro Songs and dances very occasionally. A good number of Boro films and VCDs have been produced. The popularity of the VCDs and audio cassettes is alarmingly high now-a-days and the market of the VCDs and cassettes is expanding.

Usage of Bodo Language in Administration:

The language was recognized as the Associate official language of Assam in 1984. Since then it is being used for official and administrative communication. Especially the language is used for govt circular, advt., sign boards, display boards of Govt. and private offices and institutions in Kokrajhar, Udalguri and other Boro dominated areas. Recently the newly constituted Bodoland Territorial Council has used the language more effectively for the government circular, pamphlets and booklets along with the Assamese and English language. After the coming up of the BTC administration, the Bodo language is being gradually more effectively used as the language of administration along with Assamese and English language.

Retrospect : The Boro language, like the other languages of tribal groups of India was classified under the category of tribal language or minor language. But the social reform movement launched in the first decade of 20th century led by Kalicharan

Brahma created consciousness among the people about the necessity of preserving and marinating their own language. As a result the first Magazine came out in 1920 and since then the educated youths took the lead to publish books in the language. The setting up of Bodo Sahitya Sabha is crucial in the development of the language as the literary organization played the pivotal role in introducing the language as a medium of instruction in 1963. The Boro had to establish and develop their language through continuous struggle. Only recently the language has been given the status of a scheduled language, in the 8th schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Central Institute of Indian Languages, the Sahitya Academy and other organizations of the Government of India have belatedly awakened up to initiate publications and other development activities on the language. Till date the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and its local branches took the initiative to publish books on the language, to establish the language as a medium of instruction up to the secondary stage, to publish the required textbooks, grammar and dictionary. It was a long history of struggle since 1952 where the people actively participated out of their love for their mother tongue and their urge to develop their dear mother tongue to a standard speech. Now that the Boro language has been recognized as a scheduled language , the Boro speakers can expect that they will no longer face the problems of underdevelopment and government apathy they encountered in the last six decades of its glorious struggle to establish itself.

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A tribal woman at domestic chores.

7

Introduction of Kok Borok as medium of instruction : Prospects and problems

(An analytical assessment.)

Kumud Kundu Choudhury

Before entering into the subject matter of my paper I like to introduce Kok Borok and her speech-community in a nutshell. Kok Borok, a tribal language of Tripura belonging to the Bodo-group of language of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of the great sino-Tibetan language- family is spoken by the speakers of the eight dialects namely Puran Tripuri, Reang Jamatia, Noatia, Murasing, Uchai, Kolai and Rupini. Kok Borok has sister languages like Bodo, Garo, Dimasa, Koch, Mech, Chutiya, Rabha, Hajong and Moran scattered in their respective linguistic boundary in the North-East region of India, North Bengal and Bangladesh. According to the 1991 Census there are 6,47,847 Kok Borok speakers in Tripura. But all over India total number of Kok Borok speaking people is 6,94,940 as per 1991 Census. One interesting fact here is to be noted that the linguistic Atlas of India based on 1991 census has recorded 6931 Kok Borok speakers in the Pithorgarh district in Uttar

Pradesh paving the way for controversy over the original home land of the Kok Borok speaking people and its migration route to Tripura from China via Tibet.

The time of settlement of the speakers of Kok Borok and her sister languages in the North-East region is quite unknown. In this regard the noted linguist Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee has thrown some light on this dark period. In the introductory chapter of his famous book 'The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language' he says, "The Bodo section of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Tibeto Chinese people (Bodo, Mech, Kachari, Radha, Garo, Tripura) came to Assam and East Bengal, and were spread all over East and North Bengal. The Time of the Tibeto-Burman incursion and settlement in Assam and East Bengal is not known, but it could not have been long before the beginning of the Christian era, at the earliest."

The famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Thsang visited Kamrup during the 1st half of the 7th Century and was housed in the palace of Vaskarvarman, the then king of 'Kamrupa'. During his stay at Kamrup, Hiuen-Thsang came across tribes living in the hilly region near Kamrup. He considered them a wild Tibeto-Chinese people akin to Man tribes of South-Western China. I think, the tribes Mr Huen-Thsang met were the speakers of the Bodo-group of languages flourishing in 'learning and culture' for at least years before the date of his visit. Sir George Abraham Grierson has mentioned Kok Borok in his great book *Linguistic Survey of India*. Where he says, "the BARA group, then comprises the languages spoken by the other tribes shown in the following table are True Bara i) True Bara (Kachari and Mech) ii) Rabha iii) Lalung iv) Dimasa (Hills Kachari) v) Garo (or Munda) vi) Tipura Chutiya-to this list must be added one more name, Moran. This was the language of a tribe now completely Hinduised in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

Bhasacharya Suniti Kumar Chatterjee has also recognised Kok Borok as Tipra of Mrung in his 'magnamopous' Kirata-Jana-Kriti written in the year 1950. To him Tripura of Murang is akin to old Bodo language. He has mentioned this language saying, "Nearly 303, 030 people in the state have still kept up their old Bodo language, the Tipra or Mrung".

The Government of Tripura has recognised Kok Borok as the second state language in 1979. And since 1981 this language has been introduced as medium of instruction. Initially it was introduced at Primary level and an attempt has been made to introduce it at secondary level through the gradual development of its lesson materials.

Constitutional rights and mother tongue :

The constitution of India under Article 29 (1) states that "any section of the citizens residing in India or any part there of having a distinct language script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same." Article 350 A of the constitution also lays great emphasis on instruction in the mother tongue. In 1951 UNESCO conversed an emergency meeting of experts on education. This historical meeting ended with two important suggestions. One is the use of vernacular languages in education and the other the best medium of teaching is the mother tongue. Article 350 A of the constitution also strongly recommends mother tongue is ensured.

Now, following the spirit of the Indian constitution and the recommendations made by UNESCO, Kok Borok, a tribal language of Tripura belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family of language is being used as medium of instruction in primary education and an initiative is also taken towards its upward advancement. But it should be borne in mind that Kok Borok in its 1500 years of age which is a glottochronology, a linguistic discipline, confirms, is having its status as medium of

instruction since 1981 only when the Govt. of Tripura declared it medium of instruction in primary education for which a Kok Borok speaking education minister, late Dasarath Dev, took a special interest in unveiling his mother tongue towards its onward journey to the educational world.

Kok Borok as medium of instruction :

The very need for making Kok Borok language a medium of instruction was first felt by Mr. C.W. Bolton, the then political Agent of the British Govt. working in Tripura in the last part of the 19th Century. He prepared a report on education meant for Hill Tipperah between 1872 to 1878 where he fantastically wrote "The introduction of education among the hills tribes is well nigh hopeless for two reasons first, they themselves view it no favour. They require the labour of their children either to attend to their homes while they are absent in their villages, or to assist in clearing and cultivating the jooms, and they complain that education tends to make their children become Bamboos and averse to the rough work of jooms. Secondly, as they possess no written language, they can only be educated through the medium of Bengali, and Bengali teachers would not be introduced or reside in the hills, except perhaps at rates of salary which the state cannot afford. This difficulty may be got over by training some young men of their own tribes at Agartala and sending them into the hills to open schools, but the objections of the people to relieve their children from labour at home or in the jooms will probably keep the schools empty. This appears to have been the experience of the Chittagang Hill Tracts, where primary education in the hill make no progress, except it may be among the Mughls, who have had indigenous schools for a very long period. In the Santhal Purgunnahs, although the language has no written character of its own, the missionaries are teaching through Roman or

Bengali characters. I have endeavoured to induce some of the Thakurs of Agartala to follow excellent example and draw up a grammar of the Tipperah language, which is used by the majority of the hill people, and some simple text books Enterprise of this nature, however, is above their intelligence or their conception of public utility and nothing has been done (Annual Administration Report of the Political Agent of Hill Tiperah for 1877-78. The Report for year, 1877-78 prepared by C W Bolton, the political Agent, page 121, Vol.1)”

The unique and far reaching observation made by Mr. C W Bolton mentioned above two important aspects-first, the Kok Borok (Tipperah) speaking people living in the hills cultivating jooms for their livelihood were not mentally ready to send their children to the schools hampering their domestic needs. Secondly, the elite-class or the Thakur of the Royal dynasty were very much reluctant to abide by the suggestion that the hill-brethren of them be educated in their mother tongue, so writing a grammar and text books in Kok Borok language was out of the dream. That very dream and a very pragmatic proposition dreamt by C W Bolton, a foreigner in every sense, came true after just a hundred years in 1981. So C. W. Bolton may be called the first dreamer of instruction in Kok Borok language. Kok Borok speech community ought to pay homage to the noble hearted man with utmost reverence who foresaw both the problem and prospects, lying in mother tongue-teaching aspect.

Some preconditions before Kok Borok :

A) A language cannot be used overnight as a medium of education. It needs to fulfil some preconditions in the literary area. Prior to introduction of any language as a vehicle of instruction, it must have some literary heritage which has to serve as a catalyst for lesson materials essential for framing

educational curriculum. Kok Borok is fortunate enough to overcome this Herculean problem. Apart from her rich hidden treasure of folk-literature, modern Kok Borok literature has developed enormously. Old literature in Kok Borok language was Rajmala by Durlavendra Chantai. Then with his help the Kok Borok-Rajmala was translated into other language by Sukreswar and Banerwar. But that old Kok Borok Rajmala is still missing and the controversy has yet not been settled regarding the Kok Borok Rajmala written by Pandit Durlavendra Chantai. The Second old Kok Borok literature we have come across is biographical one. In 1703 one Mr. Durgamani Tripura wrote the biography of Maharaja Mahendra Manikya, the famous king of Tripura. Then after a long gap, very interestingly we came across a valuable hidden information left by Mr. C W. Bolton in his political report of Tripura that in the fag end of the 19th Century, Jubaraj Radha Kishore was engaged in compiling a Tripuri-Bengali dictionary. But unfortunately we cannot trace out manuscript of Jubaraj Radha Kishore's work. In the beginning of the 20th Century the actual renaissance in modern Kok Borok literature began with the research oriented books on Kok Borok by Thakur Radha Mohan Debbarma and Quazi Daulat Ahmed. Since the first decade of the 20th Century, Kok Borok literature and research work slept a Ripvan winkle's sleep upto 1954 due to some mysterious reasons. 1954 keeping pace with the goeat Jana Shiksha Samity's movement for education for the first time a literary magazine called Kwtal-Kothoma purely in Kok Borok was published edited by Mr. Sudhanna Debbarma, the President of Jana Shiksha Samity. This Kwtal- Kothoma gave rise to lots of writings of different literary varieties. But this historical Kok Borok magazine was short-lived. Then came the 70's During 70's Kok Borok opened her literary flood-gate giving birth to every branch of Kokborok literature and that literary flow is still continuing. And all these phenomena fulfilled the preconditions of Kok

borok for becoming the medium of instruction capable of expressing thought of every discipline of human knowledge.

B) When a language is used as medium of education of instructions, the standardization of that language becomes a precondition and to standardize a language all her dialects must be reduced to written form through a scientific study along with the principle of modern linguistics. And, Kok Borok, fortunately did not lag behind in this respect also. Dr. Subhas Chatterjee, the then Khoyra Professor of comparative philology of the Calcutta University with his two student namely Kumud Kundu Choudhury and Shymsundar Bhattacharya studied all the 8 dialects of Kok Borok for long five years paving the way of standardization along with a very scientific spelling system involving Mr. Jogendra Chandra Debbarma and Mr. Alindra Lal Tripura as experienced informants. Later on Pandit Alindra Lal Tripura and Mr. Dasharatha Deb Barma, the pioneer of the Jana Shiksha Movement contributed their knowledge to this field to fulfil the preconditions of mother tongue Kok Borok making it fit for becoming medium of instruction.

Movement for Kok Borok as medium of instruction :

The great Jana Shiksha Movement in Tripura during the regime of Tripura's last king Maharaja Bir Bikram was successful to convince the Maharaja that his tribal subjects were illiterate and for rendering them education opening up of schools in the hills was a historical necessity. Honouring the pious demand of the leaders of the movement the judicious Maharaj established more than 400 primary schools in the Hills and the then education minister Mr. Brown executed the Maharajas order in a befitting manner. Launching Jana Shiksha movement in the mid 40's of the 20th Century under the banner of Jana Shiksha Samity really imbued urge on education with Kok Borok speech community living in the hills. And the illiterate

Kok Borok speaking people quince their thirst for education with Bengali, an alien language to them being a bit disappointed for not having education in mother tongue Kok Borok. The leader of the Jana Shiksha Samity during their movement did not raise the demand of instruction in Kok Borok language. They simply demanded education for the illiterate Kok Borok speaking masses and Bengali obviously became the medium of instruction of them as it was current as medium of instruction during Maharaja's regime. But the urge for receiving education in mother tongue remained fresh in their mind only watching for suitable time to quench their century-old thirst. And that golden opportunity came to fulfil their nostalgic dream when the Tripura Upajati Juba Samity was historically born in the year 1967 raising the slogan "Introduce mother tongue Kok Borok as medium of instruction". Among other pragmatic demands for the development of the tribal society, the leaders of the newly born tribal National political party spearheaded the issue of medium of instruction in mother tongue through a series of volatile movements and at the same time the Communist Parties began to highlight the mother tongue issue and even the Congress Party of Tripura did not dare to by pass this volcanic demand and the process of introduction of Kok Borok in primary education finally started.

Govt. Recognition :

When the Congress Party came to power in 1972 under the Chief Ministership of Mr Sukhamoy Sengupta a historical "Tribal language cell" was setup under the department of education meant for writing text books in Kok Borok language to be introduced at primary level. The motto of the Govt. was to impart some arithmetical and juvenile knowledge in primary education to the Kok Borok speaking students in their mother tongue. And to facilitate this pious will some juvenile literature

were written and given to some schools on experimental basis. Notable among this juvenile literature was the book of Ajit Bandho Debbarma's Kok Borok Swrwngma. This book was very much popular among the Kok Borok speaking children at that time. But providing education in mother tongue Kok Borok did not make much head way in this phase. There was no systematic examination arrangement for the students reading at primary level. But this experiments acted as a prelude to the mother tongue teaching process as medium of education in a later period

Kok Borok at Primary level and the dropout problem :

Soon after the left Front Govt. came to power in Tripura in 1978, the then honourable education minister Mr. Dasarath Deb (Debbarma), whose mother tongue was Kok Borok, made a sincere attempt to introduce his mother tongue at primary level from class I to class V. And the Govt. took a historical decision in this regard. The tribal language cell was revitalized with promising text book writers. Kok Borok books meant for the primary students were written out of love and affection making them qualitatively a standard one and at the same time attractive for the schoolgoers. To introduce Kok Borok in primary education in all hilly schools where the Kok Borok speaking students constitute the majority was no easy task. It was a Herculean one. So a Herculean army of hundreds of Kok Borok teachers popularly known as KBT were generated to keep pace with the gigantic task of the Govt. At this juncture of linguistic change over from Bengali to Mother tongue the whole Kok Borok speech community were in a festive mood for seeing their long cherished dream coming true. But alas, who knew that the newly introduced mother tongue as medium of instruction would suffer a serious setback due to lack of proper language planning. The excellent prospects of mother

tongue teaching turned problems insurmountable by nature when the students passed the class V and were promoted to class VI where all subjects would be taught in second language i.e. Bengali-a neighbour's language. After passing the examination of class V the students were enthusiastically admitted to class VI. But their enthusiasm disappeared in a moment when they saw the books written in Bengali as lesson materials very much misfit for them, for they were given no opportunity to read that alien language during their schooling from class I to Class - V. So the result was horrible one. It was not possible on their part to pass the class VI examination through Bengali. So the process of dropout started horribly too. The guardians and the Kok Borok teachers found no remedy for this unknown problem for which their children started deserting the schools calling themselves dropouts. Actually, the Kok Borok students admitted to primary schools were not at fault, the fault lies with the department of education which did not have any language planning for Kok Borok. Educationists attached to this department overlooked this core problem and did not make any arrangement for second language teaching at primary level. Or they were ignorant of switch over policy from first language to second language which will be the medium of instruction after primary education. This gross ignorance led thousands of Kok Borok students to an uncertain life very much disappointing their guardians and the protagonists who spearheaded the movement very painstakingly for introducing mother tongue as medium of instruction. Only a language planning can solve this problem.

Unfortunately the high dropout rates are crippling the future of the Kok Borok-speaking students at primary level affecting the secondary level also. I am giving below dropout ratio in this context based on the Report of the Enquiry

committee setup by the TTAADC (Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council) in the year 2005.

Dropout in Schools under ADC as on 14 Nov. 2005

Dropout from class I to V 64%

Dropout from class VI to VIII 78%

Dropout from class IX to X 87%

The dropout data furnished above should be carefully examined by the Govt. as well as researchers to unfold the reason for which Kok Borok speaking students are becoming the victims of dropout-ghost.

During the survey on education situation the very Enquiry Committee mentioned above provided following data disappointing in every sense.

In the year 2004 no students of primary schools under TTAADC passed the examinations in I-teacher run schools numbering 130. The number of primary schools run by two teachers is 734. In Gandachhera subdivision of South Tripura there are 143 primary schools in papers. Out of this 108 schools are closed. As on 2002, the primary schools in ADC area are 1375. The Enquiry committee found 134 Kok Borok teachers employed all over Tripura to impart lesson in mother-tongue. So, an attempt should be made on behalf of the Govt. of Tripura as well as the authority of the TTAADC to change this grim situation through sustained measures forthwith.

Need for Language planning :

It is a very difficult task to chalk out a well framed language planning for a newly constructed language like Kok Borok emerging as medium of instruction where two other dominating languages Bengali and English have sharply influenced her as rival second language to each other. So, in this trilingual

situation Kok Borok must have her own way out for all-round development as medium of instruction from primary level. Language planning has both theoretical and practical side. Both sides have inter related functions also. Practical sides deal with executive functions and this function depends on the Govt. policy that shapes the language according to its will. In this context I am tempted to quote the definition of language planning advanced by noted linguist Weinert. Where he says, "Language Planning is a Govt. authorised, longterm sustained and conscious effort to alter a language's function in society." This concept of language planning is very much applicable to Kok Borok in her transition phase of development through which she has set her onward journey. On the other hand we can seek help of Professor Einar Haugen of the Harvard University. According to him. Language planning is a set of deliberate activities systematically designed to organize and develop the language resource of the community in an ordered schedule of time." Taking into considerations both the aforesaid invaluable opinion on language planning we can apply both according to the linguistic situation of Kok Borok in Tripura. First, the intelligentsia of the Kok Borok speech-community should set a target for upto which stage they want to introduce Kok Borok as medium of instruction. If it is upto primary level the language planning will be a bit easy and if it is upto secondary stage the language planning will be a complex one. But at present, I think the very intelligentsia of the Kok Borok community are in a dilemma. They have lost their faith in their mother tongue as she can not make them reach to higher level of education as English or Bengali can do. They consider their mother tongue now as an impediment to their individual advance.

Status of Kok Borok in Hill areas:

Just on if a linguistic survey one medium of instruction in Kok Borok language is undertaken, the result will be bleak and very disappointing. In majority schools Kok Borok is not taught. The teachers meant for teaching their mother tongue are imparting education in second language, Bengali. And the guardians also seeing the bleak future of mother tongue teaching, which has no educational commercial value as Bengali or English enjoys are now withdrawing their support to their loving mother tongue once they lent through chauvinistic mass movements. It is really a big set back on the onward journey of Kok Borok. And how to overcome this set back is a matter of headache of linguists and social workers who will never accept this defeat. They will fight up to the last.

Choice of second language :

In the hills, apart from Kok Borok, Bengali and English are functioning as second language. If after the completion of primary education in mother tongue-Kok Borok one is to choose either Bengali or English as a second language. In this language change over which language will be suitable for smooth switch over from mother tongue to another language? Here the educated people of the Kok Borok speech community sharply divided while one lending his whole hearted support to Bengali as it is his neighbouring language and a lingua Franca in the whole state and is a trade language also and other expressing view in favour of English for national and international privilege. So, choosing a second language is also a difficult task.

Education in hill Areas :

Absolutely two separate systems of education are functioning in the hills neck to neck to become an alternative to each other.

There is a traditional education system both in Kok Borok and Bengali run school by the Govt. Side by side the missionaries have established their educational enterprises through English. As the social unrest is on the increase in the hills day by day and the Bengali teaching community cannot enter deep into the hilly-regions and discharge their duties at all, an acute vacuum has been prevailing in the Bengali medium schools. And the missionaries working in those inaccessible regions are trying to fill up the gap. But schooling in English is very costly. So not more than 10 per cent of total Kok Borok speaking population in the hills are able to get the benefit, the missionary run schools are rendering. And so far information is available Kok Borok is not taught there as a second language. If this is a fact, Kok Borok is suffering a lot. A monolingual situation is prevailing in the missionary schools, if this information is correct. If so, the missionary authorities should impart knowledge in Kok Borok for the sake of her development. Again, so far information goes missionary schools are also suffering from dropout diseases. The dropouts both from the Bengali and English medium schools have created their own army of unemployed youths and are leading an uncertain and bohemian life and adding social unrest to the problems held tribal regions.

Role of Tribal Elite :

Due to the nature of social stratification of the tribal society an army of status conscious privileged middle class has emerged. Though they are not averse to speaking Kok Borok, their mother tongue, they are very much averse to educate their children through mother tongue for which they launched a valiant fight. This is not their fault; the fault lies in their newly emerging occupational advancement where schooling in English language helps them go forward along

the modern economic development, their cherished goal as sophisticated partner of their global brethren irrespective of creed and colour. This privileged section hardly see any prospect in mother tongue and they prefer total schooling in English only. They never think of Kok Borok. Sometimes they suggest that Kok Borok be only the medium of instruction as a language only. No need of teaching all the subjects in mother tongue. But their kids should at least receive knowledge of mother tongue in primary education as second language. There is no alternative to mother tongue. According to the UNESCO Report in 1957 noted Psycho linguist Mr. J.R. Sharma contributed an important article on teaching mother tongue, in which he wrote, "No foreign language can take the place of the mother tongue and system of education can afford to disregard it without serious detriment to the mental development of the child. The child thinks and dreams in the language through which acquires the earliest first hand experiences of life. This naturally happens to be the mother tongue. And for this reason the mother tongue becomes the first condition of schooling for the intellectual development of the child." So, the Kok Borok speaking elite people should provide their children with the medium of instruction in primary education whenever they take their schooling. And the school authorities should be bound to make an arrangement for teaching in mother tongue; in course of time they will find themselves outcast from their speech community and suffer from the identity crisis which will lead them to an alien world.

Learning other languages :

The Kok Borok speaking students can learn three languages at primary level very easily. This is the prime time for them to learn more than one language at a time. According to the psycho-linguists this creates no extra load on their brain.

Professor Weilder Penfiend of the Machgill University of Canada, a renowned Psycholinguist and writer can be quoted in this relevant context. According to him, "The time to begin what might be called a general schooling in secondary language in accordance with the demands of brain physiology is between the 4 and 10 for all I know this might be carried out with one language in the morning and the other in the afternoon since in any case the entrance into the morning class would be a conditioned reflex that started the child in the one language while entrance into the second language." On the other hand Professor Suzanne Romian in his famous book *Bilingualism* says, "There are no critical periods in a child's development which are better or worse for language acquisition". Following the advice of both the noted psycho-linguists I can suggest that the Kok Borok-speaking students learn Kok Borok-Bengali-English-these three languages at the primary level phase-wise. In class II Bengali will be introduced and in Class III English as second language and which will help them in easy switch over on to the medium of instruction in second languages through which they will go ahead with higher education. This trilingual formula will help to stop the dropout process and then only they will find prospects overcoming the problems they are suffering from very acutely.

Kok Borok for all subjects :

Kok Borok should be introduced as medium of instruction for all subjects. Through their mother tongue the Kok Borok students will read all subjects and I emphatically say this will be from class I to class X-both primary and secondary education. Now Kok Borok is all set for her onward advancement with her rich literary heritage capable of expressing every thought of every disciple. All subject matters can be well expressed through her and there is no dearth of

terminology and the modern terminology of Kok Borok words has been devised through a terminology workshop. So, after introduction as medium of instruction nearly 25 years have elapsed. Due to sheer lack of language planning this mighty Tibeto-Burmese language is lagging behind. Kok Borok cannot wait any more. Through a well framed language planning we should help her overcome the problems. As medium of instruction Kok Borok has every prospect and incur no loss on the part of Kok Borok students. Once introduced for all subjects in school education, Kok Borok will be blown like hundred flowers paving the door of floodgates of different occupational activities.

But it is matter of great regret that the Govt. of Tripura unable to tackle the problem of teaching in mother tongue Kok Borok has changed its earlier policy almost in an about turn manner in 1996. This new revised policy maintains that since 1996 Kok Borok will be taught as language only even at primary level where all subjects were taught in kok Borok as medium of instruction since 1981 following the decision of the government. This revised policy is quite contrary to the aspiration of the Kok Borok speech community. The Govt. should not be afraid of shouldering its responsibility committed for Kok Borok. To tackle this language situation peculiar in character the Govt needs a separate Board for Kok Borok Education with well equipped infrastructural facilities. The secondary Education Board of Tripura overburdened with the problem of majority language cannot pay its full attention to the problem of Kok Borok specially after its introduction as medium of instruction into schools. A body comprising linguists, psychologists, sociologists, educationist, translators, Kok Borok literary activists may be formed to assist the board in preparing text books and other lesson materials necessary for the Kok Borok students.

Now as language Kok Borok is taught only in Ratanpur High school under Khowai subdivision upto class XII. If it is a Govt. policy, why Kok Borok is being taught in one school only as a language? After receiving knowledge in Kok Borok upto XII Class as first language, the students will obviously like to continue their mother tongue as first language at college level also. But at college level i.e. in the TDC (Three year degree course) no arrangement has been made for teaching Kok Borok. Then what will the students or Ratanpur do after passing XII class with Kok Borok as first language? If there is no such arrangement the future of Kok Borok as a vehicle of instruction must be doomed for ever. On the other hand, the UGC has created a post of lecturer for Kok Borok at the Tripura University three years ago. But who will read MA in Kok Borok if there is no honours course at college level? So, at college level both pass and Honours course should be introduced forth with without killing time. It may be a joint venture of the Govt. and the university authority. There will be no dearth of lesson materials in the form of text book in this regard. A lot of graduates and post graduates and other experienced text book writers of the Kok Borok speech community are all set to prepare lesson materials for college curriculum. They only need guidance and proper training. If in all High and Higher secondary schools Kok Borok is taught as language there will be no dearth of student for undergraduate and post graduate level. Govt should not hesitate in this matter. Only a decision is wanted on behalf of the Govt. If it is a decision of the Govt the execution will be of no problem. There will be no dearth of college teachers also. A lot of students after holding their post

graduate degrees are languishing their times as unemployed youths. Apart from post graduate of the Kok Borok speech community, an appreciable number of youth of Bengali community are holding MA degrees with sound knowledge in Kok Borok. They can also be employed as Kok Borok lecturers at college and university level. So, now the question comes of funding. Funding in this regard will create no problem. Funding from the Central Govt. for a newly created language of a sensitive linguistic zone will automatically be available.

As medium of instruction Kok Borok should be made as compulsory for non-Kok Borok students also at primary level. The very bilingual situation of Tripura demands this very earnestly. Of late guardians of the majority language community are very much eager to provide their children with knowledge in Kok Borok. If Kok Borok is made compulsory for non Kok Borok students, instantly it will act as a bridge of amity and friendship which ultimately help restore lasting peace between Kok Borok and non Kok Borok speech communities living together in hostile ethnic situation. Again teachers of Bengali community discharging duties in the hills and teachers of Kok Borok speaking community to be employed in the plains will act also as bridge of mutual security for each other. The Govt. of Tripura should explore this unique situation for its own sake. But to make Kok Borok a compulsory language needs a huge amount of money. Educated unemployed tribal youths will find employment overnight if it is made compulsory. It will pave other ways of earning based on publication of books by ... private publication. Thus Kok Borok will enter the publication world for generation of different kinds of modern economic activities.

The role of the Tripura University for the development of the Kok Borok language :

The Tripura University is also thinking for the development of Kok Borok, the second language of Tripura. To provide knowledge of Kok Borok language and literature it has introduced a 1-year Diploma in Kok Borok language and literature and this course has been attached to the Centre for Tribal languages under the University. A well framed syllabus of 500 marks for ten papers has been made for this course. Both Kok Borok and non-Kok Borok speaking students are doing this course every year with great enthusiasm. No doubt, this is an achievement for a tribal language like Kok Borok flourishing in a bilingual situation.

This year also the University authority has included Kok Borok in the foundation course at College level. A syllabus of 30 marks has been prepared comprising Kok Borok poem, essays and short stories. And an examination arrangement for this course has been made accordingly. In state's 18 colleges the Kok Borok speaking students will be able to study their mother tongue at college level for the first time. But there are some bottlenecks also. Shortage of Kok Borok teachers may hamper the foundation the course. Of late, a lot of Kok Borok students have passed their postgraduate examinations and are not having job. These unemployed youths may be appointed as part-time lecturers in those colleges.

If we make a comparative study on Kok Borok used as medium of instruction from school level to university level, we will find that the deplorable condition is prevailing at school level education. And this inert situation is continuing for last 25 years without any remedial measures. But the bright future of Kok Borok lies with success at the school level education

for its onward advancement.

Kok Borok shall overcome one day :

Kok Borok is neglected for centuries but now all set for her triumph. She is ready to triumph over all the hurdles lying in the nationality making process. The Kok Borok speech community now at the door-gate of attainment of a full fledged mighty nationality and a full blown Kok Borok-princess is ready to facilitate the process. Status conscious Kok Borok elite class please catch hold of her hand. She will show you the hidden treasure. Long live Kok Borok, long live the Kok Borok speech community.



Tripura Tribal handloom is famous for its color and texture. In handmade loom, tribal woman members are found to spent some hours a day.

8

Boro Language : A brief Accounts towards present status

Indira Boro

The Boro belongs to the Sino-Tibeto-Burmese family of languages. Accordingly to the number of speakers the Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto - Chinese family of languages has occupied the second place next to the Indo European family which is occupying the first place in the world. Its main locations were China, Tibet, Thailand, Northern Indo-China, Manchukuo and Sinkiang. It is said that this family of languages originated for the first time in the mouth of the Mongoloid people. So it was the main family for the speakers of the Mongoloid Tribets. The linguists opine that this stock originated in the plain areas of yeang tsze kiang and Huang ho rivers in China. This family is now widespread throughout the eastern and the southeastern parts of the continent. Boro is an offshoot language of Tibeto-Chinese Subfamily or the Tibeto-Chinese family itself.

The generic term Bodo was first used by Hodgson to this group of languages. Dr. G. A. Gireson had also designated

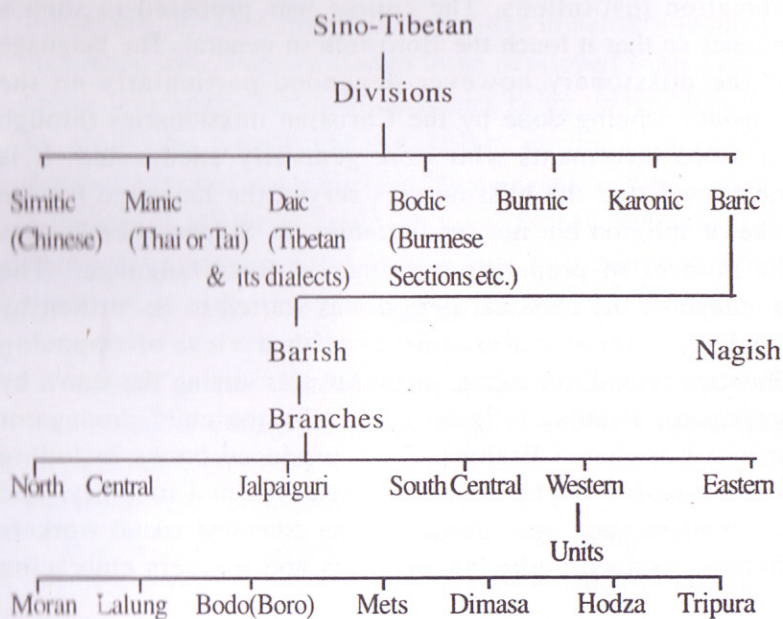
them as Bara or Bodo. The Boro group comprises (as stated in the Linguistic Survey of India, Vol-1, part-1) the following Tribes; Kachari or Bodo, Lalung (now called Tiwa), Dimasa, Garo, Rabha, Tripuri (Kok Borok), Koch, Chutiya ((Douri) and Moran. Grierson once said, the group of tribes known as Bodo or Bara forms the most numerous and important section of the non-Aryan tribes of the provinces of Assam. It is supposed that the generic term Bodo or Boro had been originated from the name of Tibet.

The Boro group of speech community is scattered at present all over Assam, NEFA (now called Arunachal Pradesh) Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, West Bengal and adjoining areas of Bangladesh. In this context, the Boro group of speech community includes Boro or Boro-Kochari, Dimasa or Dimasa - Kochari, Koch, Rabha, Lalung, Tripura, Chutiya, Garo, Hajong and a number allied tribes and sub-tribes. These Boro tribes are linguistically connected with the Nagas. According to the classification given in the "Linguistic Survey of India" the Boro or Boro Kachari, which is described in this analysis, belongs to the Boro (Bodo) subsection of Bodo-Naga section under the Assam-Burma Group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto-Chinese speech family. As per the classification given by Robert Shafer, Boro (Bodo) belongs to the western branch of Barish section under Barich Division of the Sino-Tibetan family.

As to the expansion of sino-Tibetan speakers including the Boros, S. K. Chatterjee observes: " the area of characterisation for the primitive Sino-Tibetan Speech appears to have been North-Western China between the head waters of the Huang - Ho and the Yang-tsze-Kiang rivers—— Mongoloid tribes from western china speaking forms of the Sino-Tibetan speech appear to have been pushing south and west from their original homeland from prehistoric times, but certain large-scale

movements of which we have faint likings seem to have begun in the early part of the first millennium B. C..... the Bodos, who spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and North Bengal as well as East Bengal, forming a solid block in North-East India, were the most important Indo-Mongoloid people in eastern India, and they form one of the main bases of the present-day population of these tracts. Judging from the wide range of extension of their language, the Bodos appear first to have settled over the entire Brahmaputra Valley, and extended west into North Bengal (in Koch Bihar, Rangpur and Dinajpur districts) : they may have pushed into North Bihar also, and the Indo-mongoloids who presented in North Bihar might equally have been either Bodos or 'Himalayan' tribes allied to the Newars". (Kirata-Jana-Kriti-S.K. Chatterjee).

The following is the brief tabular representation of the Sino-Tibetan languages following Robert shafer :-



The Boro has same dialect pocket area also. According to Dr. Promod Chandra Bhattacharya in his doctorate thesis, "A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro Language" (1977), says that there are at least four dialect areas of the Boro language like.

1. North-West dialect area comprising south Goalpara and Garo Hills District,

2. South-West dialect area comprising south Goalpara and Garo Hills District,

3. North-Central Assam dialect area comprising Darrang, Lakhimpur districts and a few places of Arunachal Pradesh,

4. The Southern Assam dialect area comprising Noagong, South Cachar, Mikir Hills, Kachar and adjacent districts.

The Christian missionaries, who came to propagate their religion in India, learned Bodo and its branches. They visited different areas of Assam for this purpose, prepared some preliminary books including grammar and established education institutions. The course was prepared in such a manner so that it touch the Boro folk in general. The language of the missionary however depended particularly on the translation being done by the Christian missionaries through the Boro informants who were generally uneducated. It is mentioned that the missionaries served the language for the sake of religion but not for literature. R. Sideney Eendle was the pioneer of preparing grammar in Boro language. The language of the classical period was started to be written by the Babaji (Junior Kalicharan) with a view of opposing Christianity and to making social reforms among the Boros by propagator Brahma religion headed by the chief propagator Srimat Kalicharan Brahma. They produced books including some valuable books regarding medicine and morality. The last modern stage was started by the educated social workers literary persons, politician, scholars and teachers embracing

every sphere of literary and linguistic field to arrive at renaissance of the present state. The pioneers among them in the initial stage were Jogendra Nath Basumatary, Prasenjit Sing Brahma, Birendra Brahma patgiri, Samar Bhahma Choudhury, Kamal Kumar Brahma, Charan Narzary etc.

There is no historical record regarding the use of writing Boro during the reign of the Boro king. It may be possible that there was the use of writing and written records also should have been possible, but this was completely destroyed by some powerful rulers or by some enemies only envy towards the Boro kings and their people. I have already mentioned about the specimens of the Deodhai Scripts still available in Nagaland, used during the reign of the Boro kings. Any way Borahi (Boro) Kachari king Mahamanikya (Mahamahnfifa) patronised Madhava kandali, a Brahmin Scholar, to translate the Ramayana, the great epic of India, written in Sanskrit to ancient Assamese. The language started to be developed from Sanskrit mixed with some aboriginal languages being particularly Boro by absorbing sounds and vocabulary during 14th century. Another powerful and great king Narnarayana of Koch dynasty, a branch of the Boro group of royal family patronised Sri Sankardeva and his pupil Madhadeva to produce religious books while they were propagating the Vaishnava religion in Assam during 16th century. They wrote religious books in "Brajabuli", a form of language mixed with some northern ancient Indian languages, ancient Assamese and some other original languages of Assam particularly Boro by drawing its elements from sound and vocabulary.

Any way, Boro language is recognised as the medium of instruction in the school level from 1963, from 1968 in middle

schools, from 1972 in high schools and 1976 in colleges under Gauhati University. The Boro certificate course under Gauhati University was introduced in 1985. From 1994 it introduced Diploma Course in Boro, from 1996 it introduced as P. G. course for the first time. It is recognised as MIL, subject for higher secondary students by NEHU Shillong. The Dibrugarh University also recognised as a MIL from 1994. It is also included in eighth schedule of Indian Constitution from 2005. The Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) has also taken up lot of projects for the development of the Boro language. It was also introduced as an official state language of Assam in 1984. *To enrich knowledge of the student come different areas of Assam Boro language is being taught.* Among the religious propagators R. Sidney Endle prepared one Boro grammar named "Outline Grammar of the Kochari (Bara) Language (1894), as spoken in the district of Darrang. After that the Boros tried themselves to bring out some Magazines and books in manuscript forms. In 1915 Ganga Charan Das (Kachari) wrote a book "Boro Fisa O Ayen" from Dudnoi, Goalpara district. Then the Bibar was published by some literate Boro people. The Christian Missionaries had used Roman script and the Boro writers used both Assamese and Bengali scripts for their writing because Boro had no scripts then. But from 1975 the Devanagari script have been accepted to write Boro text books. Till now this script is being used in writing Boro language.

Kokrajhar Dialect was selected as standard language for the Assamese written language. It is said that the Roman, Assamese and Devanagari scripts are still used to write the Boro language. It is because Boro had no script. Even then it is said that the "Deodhai Hangkho" to be used to fulfil their

purpose. The specimens of this script was available till now in the inscriptions of stone pillar wreckage and main gate to the Royal palace of the Boro kings in Dimapur, now in Nagaland, a state of India. According to Late Kala Guru Bishnu Prasad Rabha, a prominent Boro writer and artist of Assam, an old stone plate written with Deodhai scripts in Boro Language is still found in a certain family of Naga Tribe in Nagaland as he reported to Dangkha Bramachari of Phulmati Ashrama in Bijni. Thus Boro persons related with these Ashramas demanded to introduce these scripts belonging to the tribe in lieu of Assamese. But the matter of accepting quite new and in-acquainted scripts are very costly; therefore, the Boro Sahitya Sabha did not give any importance to their demand. Now the Devnagari script is going on for the written Boro language.

The Boro language has different stages of development through literature-1. Folklore, 2. Christian Missionary, 3. Classical or old form and 4. Modern.

Boro tribe by tradition have a storehouse of folklore including tales, ballads, legend, idioms, proverbs, religious chants etc. The language of the folklore stage is very simple, poetic and ancient. The oral literature was collected later on in book forms, giving spelling system in modernised method. They were first written in Roman, Assamese and Bengali scripts. The Missionary stage of Boro is marked with production of text books' from English to Boro, production of text books for preliminary classes of school education in modified Roman scripts. The spelling system and terminology were used to suit the Boro sound and Boro literature. This period existed in between the last quarter of the 19th century and first to second quarter of 20th century. The classical or old form started towards the end of the first 20th century and lasted toward the 20th century, from when the modern age of Boro literature started

in 1952 as soon as All Boro Sahitya Sabha was initiated. The classical stage had unscientific spelling system in Bengali and Assamese and less technical terms were used. The writers of different areas used different spellings and terminologies on their own without any uniformity among themselves.

Comparatively the language used in the folklore stage was simple, natural and text books, books on science, history, geography, grammar and dictionaries have also been written in recent times. Reference books and history of literature were also composed for the benefit of the students and the readers. Literary genres like poetry, short story, drama, novel, prose and various articles, children literature, biography, travelogue etc. are also flourishing in the field of Boro written literature. It is also recognised by the Sahitya Academy. So right now it is most necessary for a scientific analysis of the Boro language. It is expected that the analysis will help both the readers and the scholars of language and linguistics as a whole. It is said that in this language, linguistic study had been initiated primarily by some enthusiastic Christian Missionaries towards the last few years of the 19th century. For example "Outline Grammar of the Kachari (Bara) Language (1884)" by R. Sidney Endle: A short grammar of the Mech or Boro Language (1889)" by R. L. Skrefsrud etc., Dr. Pramod Chandra Bhattacharya and Late Bhaben Narzy were pioneer and noted persons in the field of Boro language and culture.

Boro has occupied second place next to Assamese in case of the text books published by the Assam State. Text Book Production and publication corporation. It signifies that the Boro is occupying second place also in case of the member of students, teachers and schools in Assam. This language for

business and cultural set up. Thus Boro has occupied a high status not only in the field of language and literature but it is occupying very high place in the tradition and culture too.

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Tribal villagers prepare land for jhum (slash and burn) cultivation in the hilly region of Tripura.

9

KOK BOROK TOWARD A DEVELOPED LANGUAGE

Rabindra Kishore Deb Barma

The Kok Borok is one of the oldest language amongst the languages of our country. It is not only oldest language but also a living one. Otherwise this language might have been lost from our tongue. This language is living as oral language through generations for the span of centuries. No effort had been made for development of this language. From hundred of years back this language has been kept aside by the social authorities and intellectual. even today such negligence towards this language is continuing. No effective and concerted venture have been taken up. A section of the intelligentsia of the Kok Borok speaking people are taking care about development of their language as a matter of fact. But they did not work personally and practically for this question of Kok Borok development, their rule is to advise only. However Kok Borok is still living and moving towards development. Because Kok Borok is recognised as a living and developing language.

Speaking about language, we find the charter of UNESCO (1993), there are six thousand language in the world. Again

according to Monorama year book (2002) the total number of languages in the world stands to 6800 and in India alone it is said to be 1652 languages. Apart from this there are large number of languages of small speech communities. These languages could not yet come at par with the developed languages. As such these languages are still behind the eyes of the developed societies of the people. There are also such instances that a good number of languages of the small speech communities have totally been extinguished. My personal view is that the future of the languages which are still in oral stage is not so promising. These languages, the culture of the communities of these languages are also lost. It is a fact that the culture of the people of small communities are generally influenced by the culture of developed societies of the people. Consequently the small communities intend to adopt the culture of the developed societies ignoring their own. Thereafter they become a lost society. This is a very alarming event so far a society is concerned. But our Kok Borok language is still moving slowly but steady to achieve the goal of a developed language. This is encouraging on the part of our society that our language has not been swallowed by the developed language. We are all aware that our sister language 'Bodo' has been included in 8th schedule of the constitution. We also are aware that active languages 'Bodo', Maitai and Santal have been included in the said schedule.

Kók-Borok is now recognised by the state Govt. as a state language along with Bengali. As per article 245 of the constitution Kok Borok also has been recognised by the state as state language by way of enactment of act by the Tripura Legislative assembly in 1963. In the year 1975-76 when Sukhamay Sengupta was the Chief Minister Kok Borok was pronounced as a medium of instruction to the Kok Borok

speaking students. Thereafter Kok Borok was introduced as a medium of instruction to the Kok Borok speaking people sporadically but not in a planned manner. The left front Govt. recognised kokborok as one of the official languages through an enactment of a bill in the Tripura Legislative Assembly on the 19th January 1979. Here is a point worth mentioning that the bill was adopted by the Assembly unanimously. All the members of the Assembly extended their support to the bill.

Thereafter Kokborok is moving forward slowly but steadily with its vivacity and distinctive originality to touch the rich literature of the rich languages. In this task a good number of kokborok scholars and writers are being involved. According to the 'Rajmala' of Kailash Chandra Singha, the two brothers, Brahmin Sukreswar and Baneswar translated 'Rajmala' in Bengali version from Sanskrit with the help of Chantai Durlav Narayan. Kailash Chandra Singha mentioned that Durlav Narayan composed the "Rajmala" in Kokborok also at the time. It is already approximately 550 years the Sukreswar and Baneswar wrote the Rajmala in Bengali. But the Rajmala in Kokborok, as mentioned by Kailash Chandra Singha, is not available and there is no possibility to find out of the same. Besides it is known that Maharaja Radha Kishore Manikya Bahadur also completed a Kokborok dictionary. This dictionary also could not be found out elsewhere. It is also known that another Manuscript of Kokborok Book written in 1703 has been preserved in the Agartala museum. The writer of this book was Durga Prasad Narayan who had also written Biography of Mahendra Manikya. After prolonged lapse of time Doulat Ahamed, M. N. Dahar and Ahammed Omor wrote a Kokborok Grammar 'Kok Boroma' in the year 1307 Tring (1898 A.D.) There after in between 1900 to 1907 Radhamohan Thakur wrote another Kokborok Grammar, Kok Borokma and also

Traipur Kathamala compiled of stories and translation) and Traipur Bhashabhidhan (small kokborok Dictionary). We find from above that there were Kokborok loving personalities in the regime of the kings of Tripura and they worked for the Kokborok language. But in absence of the Royal patronage Kokborok could not be developed. We all know the fact of kokborok thereafter, that kokborok remained alive as Oral Literature before the kokborok speaking people.

There was politics in respect of its script of kokborok and it is still continuing. The political parties are in the opinion of kokborok development. But no effective and meaningful activities have so far been taken by them. In this regard they take action for the cause of kokborok to the extent least necessary. They feel to console the kokborok speaking people. Now it is a fact, that kokborok is a recognised state Language. But the effective planning for introduction of kokborok in school/ college and official works is yet to be taken up, only the pompous discourses and serious debates are going on in the name of development of kokborok.

Kokborok is one of the 25 or 37 points for development of the Tribal people. But it is only in paper. The prolonged demand of Kokborok scholars and writers for establishing a separate kokborok Directorate has not being considered by the state Govt. On the occasion of 25th anniversary in 2004 H. E. Governor of Tripura stated in his speech that Tribal Language Directorate should have been established for the sake of development of Kokborok. But this has not yet materialised. The observation and recommendation of Kokborok Bhasha Commission headed by Pabitra Sarkar has not been made public and kept frozen. Such acts of the Govt, are not appreciable. I am of the firm view that such acts of the Govt. are not congenial for creating atmosphere for the development of Kokborok

language. The development of Kokborok virtually relate to the overall development of the tribal people. There should be separate wing in the T.B.S.E. named by Kokborok speaking officers to look after the introduction of Kokborok Language in the high and Higher Secondary Level pending creation of the proposed wing. President or Secretary of the Board should be appointed from Kokborok speaking people.

It is amazing to observe that a section of Kokborok writers and scholars are feeling content at the present status of the Kokborok Education in primary to Higher Secondary Level of School. But we find in practice after 27 years of recognition of Kokborok by the State Govt. Kokborok is not being taught or used for imparting Education to the Kok Borok speaking areas. The reasons behind it should be thought of. Kokborok is not taught as vernacular in the High and Higher Secondary School except in Ratanpur H/S (+2) Stage School. If the State Govt. desired Kokborok as vernacular subject might have been introduced in other schools also. That is to say introduction of Kokborok as medium of instruction in the junior Basic School and as a vernacular subject in the High and H/S (+2) stage School lies in the honest desires of the State Govt. Because at present there are hundreds of graduate and master Degree holder unemployed youths belonging to Kok Borok speaking people.

Despite the hindrances on the way of Kokborok development, I have already stated here that Kokborok is moving forward. The Kokborok writers are in rising and they are bringing out a good number of Kokborok stories, poems, novels and some of the Kokborok writers have got state and national level recognition. Presently Kokborok Diploma Course under the Tripura University is continuing a lot. This course is consists of papers like Poems, novels, short stories, essays,

drama, grammar and folk literature with total number of 500 marks. In the present session, out of the total learners majority are from the Kokborok speaking people. It shows that the graduate and master degree holders of the Kokborok speaking youths have become interested to know in depth about the history and present status of their own Language.

It is also a notable point that we come to know Tripura University has taken step to introduce Kokborok foundation Course in the College Education. Further I believe, Kokborok honours Course in the graduate Level may now easily be introduced. At the present juncture I am confident that Kokborok will certainly achieve the goal. Tribal youths of today are taking keen interest on Kokborok literature and contributing themselves to enrich it.

In conclusion I have the urge that the scholars and Kokborok writers should take up concerted and conscious venture in the process of building up Kokborok as a standard and developed Language. At the same time that State Govt. should be responsible to take step for inclusion of Kokborok in the 8th schedule of Indian Constitution.



Tripuri with traditional musical instrument.

10

An Evaluation of Kok borok language & literature

Shyam Lal Debbarma

'Kokborok' belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese group of languages. There are eight groups of tribes who are speaking this language. They are Debbarma or Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Kolai, Murasingh, Rupini and Uchai. The total population speaking this language in Tripura, Assam and neighbouring country, Bangladesh are about 12 lakhs. As the language of Tripura its name is Tripuri, Tripura or Tippra. But the language is commonly known as 'Kokborok' although the eminent philologists headed by Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay, Dr. Sukumar Sen, Mr. Grierson, W. W. Hunter mentioned about this language as Tippra or Mrung. In his famous book (The Origin and Development of Bengali Language), Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay says-"To the North East, and east Bengal meet dialects of the Bodo group; Bodo or Kachari (also known as koch, Mech and Rabha), Garo and Dimasa as well as Mrung or Tripura"- (O.D.B.L introduction, page no.3). Mr. Lewin also mentions this language as Tipperah or Tippih. The only writer

among this language speakers, Radhamohan Thakur Debbarma revealed 'Kokborok' in public in the year 1900 A.D. In Tripuri language 'Kok' means 'word' or language and 'Borok' means 'Men'. General meaning is Men's word or language. But in broad sense this language speakers understand 'Borok' as his 'own'- such as 'Riborok' = own cloth, Cha-borok = Own food, Tak-borok = Own wearing method etc. In that sense Tripuris created a usage 'Kokborok' as their language speaking sister language of Garo tribes also call their language 'Munda kusik' or 'Achik kusik' means language of men. It is mentioned in the Linguistic Survey of India. Gierson writes- "The Garos call their language Mande kusik. i.e the language of the men, or 'Achilk-kusik. i.e. the language of the hill men." The Manipuris also call their language 'Maite lone' or own language.

Although Kokborok language had not its own script, it adopted the scripts of Bangla and published its literature a century ago. According to Rajmala of Tripura during the rule of one hundred eighty four kings of the dynasty, although the kings were of the same language group, none of the rulers took initiative for the development of this language and no supportive reference is found in this context. This language group kings accorded honour to Rabindranath Tagore as 'Bharat Bhaskar' to show their novel heartedness and their patronage in the field of art and culture. After independence Tripura merged with India and passed fifty years but within this long period this language remained far away from obtaining its dignity and recognition. Solely surviving on folk literature this language got recognition as one of the state languages in the year 1979 when the left front government came to power in the state for the first time. Like Aryans the language of ancient tribes in clan life was also primarily in oral stage. The Vedas maintained existence through memory hearing and

recitation, passed on orally from century to century. This way Kokborok also passed on orally from century to century. finally emerged in the written form during the end of eighteenth century. In the year 1897 A.D. Doulat Ahmed and Mohammed Umar had written 'Kokboroma' and it may be called the first written book in Kokborok. In the year 1900 A.D. Thakur Radhamohan Debbarma had given its full form by writing three books-A Grammar, a dictionary and a conversation learning book. On that basis the Government of Tripura celebrated the centenary ceremony of written form of Kokborok in the year 2000 A.D. and through this celebration the Govt. had shouldered the historical responsibility in propagating the glorious heritage of Kokborok. On the occasion of centenary ceremony a Souvenir 'Yakhwtng' had been published in which many eminent writers tried to express their views about the written form of Kokborok language that actually it is not hundred year old, but it is about three hundred years old. It was traced that in the year 1703 A.D. Durga Prasad Narayan had written a book to glorify the Tripura Maharaja Mahendra Manikya Bahadur which was not published publicly. There was the confirmation that prince Radhakishore completed Kokborok dictionary in 1876-77 A.D. It was mentioned in the Administrative Report of the then British Political Agent of Tripura Mr. T.E. Cockshead (No.134 dated 26th June 1876)- "The Yubaraj has moreover, at my suggestion set about the compilation of a Tipperah Vocabulary. He is perfectly acquainted with the vernacular of the people, and I am in hopes that the result of his undertaking will have some scientific effect itself." In the report of Mr. C.W. Bolton, the said Reports are supported. It says "The Yubaraj is still engaged in the compilation of Tipperah-Bengali dictionary and lately he has become a member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal

(Administrative Report No.196-dt. 17th July, 1879.) But the compilation activities of Yubaraj was not noticed by any body except in the report of the British agent. It is believed that previously the Rajmala also was written in Kokborok. But that Rajmala also was never published in public. That's why it may be said surely that 'Kokboroma' was the first written book of Kokborok. So the history of written form of Kokborok is not a matter of three hundred years, but it is of one hundred six years.

Now if we discuss the one hundred six years dividing it in two spells it would be easily understood about the growth of Kokborok language & literature. The first spell is first fifty three years and the second spell is last fifty three years. After Thakur Radhamohan Debbarma the second personality was Khushi Krishna Tripura, whose Kokborok book was published in public. In 1942 A.D. Khushi Krishna was one of the main disciples of the undisputed leader Ratanmani Tripura of Reang revolt, who had composed thirty three spiritual songs, namely 'Kha Kachang Khumber' and published. At the same time Alindra Lal Tripura tried to design Kokborok script and paid attention to experiment in the creation of literature but was not able to publish book. During the first four decades of Nineteenth Century on one side there was violent fight for freedom all over India, on other side there was the inner-fight that went on for socioeconomic life of the tribes of hill Tripura. That was primitive system of Jhum cultivation vs plain land cultivation side by side there was also a deep attention to Education of a few persons. In 1942 A.D. there was the wave of 'Quit India' movement all over India and in Tripura there was the Reang Revolt under the leadership of Ratanmani. The King's discriminatory treatment against Reang people side by side

non-confidence against the 'Choudhury' titled by the patronage of the king, awakened the Reang people and compelled them to revolt that day. But the strict hand of the king suppressed the revolt. Ratanmani was killed brutally, agitators were dispersed. . After this, Jana Siksha Samiti was established in 1945 A.D. under leadership of Sudhanna Debbarma, Hemanta Debbarma and Dasarath Debbarma to create awareness against illiteracy, superstition prevalent among the tribal people. This propaganda had great effect to create great public flow at that time. They established 488. Primary Schools in the remote areas of the state by their own effort, which obtained Govt. affiliation later on.

In the meantime, India won freedom in 1947, the last king of Tripura Bir Bikram Manikya Bahadur died, Tripura merged to India as union territory, with introduction of civil administration in the state etc. Memorable incident and sub-incident happened. That's why the practice of Kokborok literature was neglected and the first part of the one hundred six years of Kokborok written form passed almost fruitless. During the time of Jana Shiksha movement the written literature had not properly appeared but a new excitement was created in the field of culture. The cultural activists headed by Mahendra Debbarma, Nakul Debbarma, Aswini Debbarma, Ranjan Roy composed different songs with Theatre, shadow Drama and through this nourished the compound of culture. At that time they sang "Hani maya chung Naruknai, Lekhapara chung Surungnal". Whose English meaning is 'We shall love our country, we shall read and learn'- The song is about Nationalism as it is one of the excellent compositions to increase the awareness of Education. On those days innumerable song of such simple and easy composition may

resounded in the air and sky of Tripura. The long time latent desire nourished by the tribal people of Tripura, through the agitation of Jana Shiksha that flows in thousand streams, in the life of hill peoples, opened the door of emancipation. A new inspiration spread around the hill. But the great hope declined very rapidly. An excessive share of cursed fruit's poisonous juice of India's partition fell on Tripura. The Hindu Muslim riot took place in 1948. As a result thousands of refugees entered Tripura and very soon it exceeded original population. Tripura surrounded in three sides by the recent Bangladesh is compelled to shoulder such burden. As a result it created equilibrium crisis of land, gradually it affected the economic policy and social policy of the state. When we analyse the above noted incidents it clearly shows that the last part at the four decades was extremely agitated in the sky and air of Tripura. After the death of king Civil administration was begun and arrest order had been issued against the leaders of Jana Shiksha movement. In the name of search for leaders, military oppression went on in the villages. Measureless torture showered over the villagers, then began illegal detention and gutting of hundreds of houses by the military. At that moment to protect the tribal villages from the hand of military they formed Ganamukti Parishad. It started preventive movement. Although the agitation scattered around the state but the leaders were not able to escape arrest. They were thrown in the faraway jail of Hajariabag, Bihar. That imprisonment was the excellent creative place to the hands of Sudhanwa Debbarma, the founder President of Jana Shiksha movement. His famous novel 'Hachuk Khurio'(In the lap of hill) was composed there. Just after release from imprisonment Sudhanwa Debbarma at first Published Periodical Kokborok literature-"Kutal Kathama". It

be said that a new life was indicated in the universe of Kokborok literature. Many writers came forward. In the mean time Amarendra Debbarma (Bangshi Thakur), Sudhir Krishna Debbarma, Jitendra Debbarma, Mahendra Debbarma began transition to give life to Kokborok language. The second part of the first decade of Kokborok was well developed with the participation of Ajit Bandhu Debbarma, Shantimoy Chakraborty, Kshirode Prabha Debi, Jogendra Chandra Debbarma, Sonacharan Debbarma. In the first part of the next decade there was the ebb tide in the literary world of Kokborok. Nationalism movement begins in the end part. News writers begin public appearance. All India Radio comes forward to Broadcast Kokborok literature regularly. Haridas Debbarma, Shyam Lal Debbarma, Manindra Debbarma, Sukla Rani Debbarma, Sukumar Debbarma, Narendra Debbarma, Mani Gosain Jamatia were regularly participating in the section of Kokborok literature of All India Radio. Meanwhile 'Lama, Sachlang, Aitarma, Hanikok, Hawjlai, Khumbar etc. Periodical literatures also appeared, Although the life span of many of the above did not extend very far, except 'Lama' periodical published by Gana Mukti Parishad. During the first part of seventies two organisations appeared namely Kokborok Sahitya Sabha and Kokborok Unnayan parishad

In the year 1978 Left Front government was formed in the state. On 19th January 1979, Kokborok has been unanimously recognised in the state Legislative Assembly as one of the state languages under the effort of the government "Tripura Kogtoon" (edited by the essayist) weekly newspaper is being published in which two pages are allotted for literature. So many aged and young poets and writers come forward to develop the pages of Tripura Kogtoon. Education Department

formed Kokborok Advisory Board and Kokborok text book writer Committee; started publication of different subjects wise Kokborok medium text books for classes one to five. Teaching started newly in 1200 schools from class one gradually up to class five through Kokborok medium from 1982. But after five years the teaching learning process stopped due to change of political scenario. With a great regret it is necessary to mention here that after five years though government changed the indifference towards the development of Kokborok language did not get corrected till date. Now a days Kokborok is being taught as subject in some schools from class six gradually up to class twelve; but due to lack of planning and infrastructure, the development of Kokborok language is not remarkable. Regarding introduction of Diploma course in Kokborok by Tripura University, there also, planning has not been done properly .

However, there may not be remarkable development in school education system but this may not mean there is lack of effort for the development work of literature among the poets and writers of this language speaking people. In the mean time there appeared ten/twelve literary periodicals. Although not mentionable is the age of any literary newspaper. Every year a few publishers namely Kokborok Sahitya Samsad, Kokborok tie Hukumu Mission, Hachookni Khorang, Dey Kokborok Publishers etc published some books in Kokborok. The writers of this language are writing basic poetry, story, novel etc, side by side the writers of this language pay attention to translate the Indian literature, moreover they pay attention to translate the foreign literature. Meanwhile, language honour award of Sahitya Academy has been obtained by the prominent poet

Chandrakanta Murasing of Tripura. At present prominent Kokborok poet and writers are Nanda Kumar Debbarma, Rabindra Kishore Debbarma, Budhrai Debbarma, Sudhanya Tripura, Sunil Debbarma, Haripada Debbarma, Sachlang Tripura, Snehamoy Roy Choudhury, Kunja Bihari Debbarma, Nitai Acharjee, Kamalia Debbarma, Utpal Debbarma and others.

Remarkable practice is seen in the field of song and drama but the development is very poor in the field of cinema . Even so, it may be said that efforts for alround development of this language are going on, which will blossom tomorrow in flowers and fruits.



Long hand drum of Garos.

11

Development of Tribal Language : Some observations

Dr. Jaya Deb Barma

The title of my paper is "Development of Tribal language. Some observation". The main objective of this paper is to highlight my observation which has been drawn under the context of the development of tribal language in Tripura. While reflecting my opinion, sincere effort has been made to trace the contributory factors which led to the development of Kok-Borok language in Tripura. I find here myself fortunate enough to share my views about mother tongue with fellow delegates of this academic house. The source materials used in my paper is based on original and secondary sources like "Rajamala", Second Lahar of Kali Prasanna Sen; "Tripurar Smriti" of Samrendra Chandra, "The Linguistic Survey of India" by G.A. Grierson; "A Statistical Account of Bengal" by W.W. Hunter, "Kokborok Chhurung" of Late Dasarath Deb etc. The interview with Maharaja Kumar Sahadev Bikram Kishore Debbarma and my close association with the ideas and movement of late Dasarath Deb regarding Kok Borok development in the State, was part of research survey while

doing Ph. D work, added much to frame the theme of this paper.

In the North Eastern India, the development of tribal language has been considered as one of important tools for social changes. Consequently, with the formation of state, the concept of language development took a serious turn in the history of the region. Like the recognition of Manipuri language in Manipur, Khashi language in Meghalaya, the development of other languages in the Northeastern India can be studied under historical context and it has been found that Kok Borok experienced a hazard of colonial culture in the history of Tripura. Under British rule in India, the Kings of Tripura patronized Bengali language in their administrative work and gradually it penetrated in the social fabric of Tripura. The linguistic dialogue of the 'ruler' did rule over the language of the 'ruled' and in the process of socioeconomic development of the State, the development of Kokborok, lost its independent growth. During Princely days, the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges of the State of Tripura hardly testify the leniency of the rules in their curriculum.

In the year 1899 Kazi Daulat Ahmed wrote a book in Kokborok. In the 1900 year Radha Mohan Thakur a noble of Maharaja Radha Kishore Manikya wrote a book Namely "Kokborokma". Almost in the same time Dr. Grierson compiled the linguistic survey of India giving due regard of Kokborok language. Incidentally it may be mentioned that W.W Hunter, compiled a comparative Kokborok and languages around 1876, which enables us to have a look into the nature of development of Kokborok language. The History of kings of Tripura were narrated in Kokborok by the Royal priest known as Chantai which were subsequently written in the form of "Rajmala" by various authors.

For the common people folk tales, war song, Jhum songs, festival songs, wedding song, love song etc. also developed in the Kokborok language. Maharaja Kumar Samarendra Chandra, son of Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya wrote a book in 1927 (Tripura Smriti) we come across a beautiful song title.

Resiar Khagra

Haduk duk kalak maisui pingjagui

Pagari nurug lia jadu Pagari nurug lia

Haduk duk kalak Gunthu pinjagui

Yakurai nurug lia jadu Pagari nurug lia

It reveals that the Tripuri warriors were very brave and duty bound. During war they did not only lament over their sacrifice. They expressed their sweet memories of near and dear ones. The theme of another Kok-Borok Song can be observed:

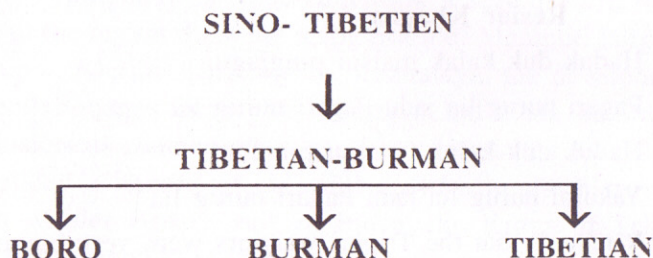
"Pachim paro sipai chamtory

Pub paro bothai chhai kurung"

In-this song we find the expression of the village women who say that the people of the East are proficient in weaving while there is always war in the west i.e. Comilla. Similarly we can easily identify different seasons associated with the Jhum cultivation culture. In the religious festivals too we find that languages and expression are centred around the deity- that is Gorja and Kalia worship were performed by tribal people.

When India became free from the British clutches, the state of Tripura was inhabited by Tribal people. According to Dr. Suniti Kumar Chattapadhyay, linguist of Bengal, defined that "Tribal means Adibasi inhabiting inaccessible hilly areas of the North-East, they are identified as Kirat. Dr. Verrier Elwin, German Antropologist holds Tribal means primitive people."

In the ancient Sanskrit the word used as *Bhumiputra*. In Indonesia the word means the people of the country or son of soil. UNESCO defined Tribal as indigenous people. Dr. Ranjit Kumar Bhattachariya defined as *Nimnabargerlok*. Most of Tribal of North-East belongs to Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto Chinese origin.



Chutia, Dimas-Garo, Hojai, Kokborok, Kuch, Mech, Raabia Tiwa (lalung) Bru Debbarma Jamatia -kolai Murasing Rupini Tripura-Uchai. The UNESCO is of the opinion that the Tribal languages are within 4000 to 5000 in numbers out of the total of 6000 languages. As per Census Report of Tripura from 1901 to 1931 Tribal people were majority in numbers. According to 2001 Census Report the Tribal in Tripura is 9,93,426. Most of them speak in Kokborok language. In our neighbouring country "Bangladesh" there are 1,25,000 numbers of Kokborok speaking tribals. They mostly reside at places namely Khagrachhari, Bandarban, Rangamati in hill areas, of Chittagang. In the plains they live in Comilla, Syllehet, Chandpur, Rajbari etc. of Bangladesh. The eminent German Scholar Max Muller identified that the development of language takes place through Folk lore, Cradle songs, proverbs, Jokes etc. at four stages : 1. Thematic Period, 2. Dialective Period, 3. Mythological Period, 4. Popular Period. We may assume that the development of Kokborok languages took place in

Tripura on above principles from the past to the present. In the past Kokborok was a spoken language only and later it took a form of writing.

Jana Siksha Samity took a massive effort to popularise education among the common people. The Jana Siksha Samity established many Schools (Primary level) which were situated in very remote places. Kokborok was used as a language communication for teaching. After that for the development of Kokborok, Sudhanya Debbarma, one of the leaders of Jana Siksha Samity, wrote and stage a small drama in Kokborok to popularize the Kokborok language. Between 1945 to 1957 he wrote many books and published "Katal Kathama", "Hachuk Khurio". In 1977 Dasarath Deb, another leader of Jana Siksha Samity wrote a book for the common people namely "Kok Borok Chhurung". It is a valuable book for Kokborok people for guideline. At that time we came across a Kokborok song as under "Nini numa le balanga thanka nini nufa le mishhil o thanka takabdi takabdi o monai o " it will be evident that the language also inspired the political consciousness of the common people. There after "Yapri" Newspaper came out with Mohendra Debbarma as the publisher. He also composed innumerable songs in Kokborok, Bengali & Hindi Languages. Dr. Suhas Chattopadhyaya, Linguist of Calcutta University came to Tripura for study of Kok Borok Language and as a result we got Kumud Kundu Choudhury as one of the research scholar of the team and at present he is in charge of Kok Borok centre in the Tripura University. He has contributed immensely in the development of Kokborok Language even in the curriculum of Tripura University. There after we find that Dr. Puspa Karapurakar came from the Central Institute of Indian Languages of Mysore for phonetic study. A Kokborok grammar has been published around 1976. The Kokborok Language was given

due recognition as official language in 19th January 1979. At present a number of institutions have been formed such as Kokborok Sahitya Sanskriti Samsad, Vasha Commission was formed for introducing Kokborok language at School level. Around 2000 Kokborok teachers have been appointed and text book of the said language have been printed. At Ratanpur of Khowai Subdivision, Twelve standard School has been established where Kokborok is being taught. Govt. has also established Tripura State Tribal Cultural Research Institute and Museum for further development of the language.

It can be realized that Kokborok language is flourishing in the state through several educated individuals and their writings and publications. Some of the writers of Tripura who contributed for the growth of Kokborok language are as follows : Sri Ajit Bandhu Debbarma, Sri Nagendra Jamatia, Sri Alindra Tripura, Sri Shyam Lal Debbarma, Sri Nitai Acharjee, Sri Chitta Jamatia, Sri Chandra Kanta Murasingh, Sri Rabindra Kishore Debbarma, Sri Nanda Kr. Debbarma, Sri Ruhi Debbarma, Sri Narendra Debbarma, Sri Hemanta Jamatia, Sri Binay Debbarma, Sri Getya Kr. Reang, Sri Shnehamoy Ray Choudhury, Sri Sukhendu Debbarma, Sri Bikash Roy Debbarma, Sri Sunil Debbarma, Sri Arun Debbarma, Sri R. G. Singh etc. The present status of Kokborok is as follows :

1) Kokborok was recognized as one of the state language of Tripura on 19th January 1979. 2) A certificate course of Kokborok was introduced in Tripura University from 1993. 3) Declared the official language of the TTAADC on 20th April 1999. 4) Kokborok was introduced in Primary school as medium of instruction in the TTAADC Schools and Kokborok text book was introduced up to Plus Two stage level under TBSE. 5) At present Films, Dramas, Modern Songs Cassettes and CDs enriched the language.

OBSERVATIONS :

a) Under colonial period, the Kokborok language could not see its independent growth in the State of Tripura. It travelled its path under the collaboration of non-tribal languages, mostly spoken by the 'mainlanders'. The responsibility of the slow development of Kokborok lies in its historicity, where the clash between National Education Policy and Western Model of Education can be witnessed, despite the benevolent approaches of the kings of Tripura in the development of its sociocultural relations among the masses of State.

b) Jana Siksha Movement was an important episode in the history of Tripura around the year 1945's where Kokborok language found an ample opportunity to become the voice of the movement which was launched for the spread of educational consciousness in the State. Tribal language became the tool of this movement. The use of the word "Michhil" in Kokborok song do testify this fact. We do not find such 'Michhil' word in any written records of Kokborok language before 1945. Hence, Jana Siksha Samity became instrumental for the development of Kokborok language.

c) When we talk about the development of Tribal language, we usually forget the fact that no language can see development without developing the status of women. In case of Tripura, the education status of tribal women is very deplorable particularly in the colleges and University. We may boast that the literacy rate of Tripura is higher than the average literacy rate of India but it does not guarantee the level of educational status where social changes in the society can take place and the mother language becomes more mature to enrich her with the glow of other languages. The development of Tribal language without the educational participation of Tribal women will be a myth. All opportunities should be provided to them

to upgrade their status in the higher education.

CONCLUSION :

In the light of above facts, it can be concluded that the pace of development of Tribal language in post independence era has been marked slow and cooperation of all sections of society is needed for its speedy growth, and in this regard, the upgrading education status of tribal women should be taken into account on a large scale. Historically, we have every reason to believe that the development of Kokborok will stand in the firm footing along with the development of other languages and this will ultimately help in the creation of homogenous and peaceful society in the State of Tripura.

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12

Scientific and Technical Terminology - A basic need to develop Kok Borok

Smt. Kamala Sundari Debbarma.

Kok Borok as a language is quite old and resourceful. It has a vast treasure house of folk-lore folktales. Other forms of literary creations, such as modern poetry, short stories, novels and dramas that are being written in Kok Borok are also of high standard. These can easily be compared with those of other Indian languages.

But when it comes to writing on scientific or technical subjects, kokborok lags behind. I am not a student of science, nor a writer in kokborok. Still I have dared to present this paper as the theme of this seminar is sharing of experience.

For some time I worked in the All India Radio. When we had to conduct discussions, presentations or interactions on scientific or technical topics in kokborok, we would often face difficulties for want of standardised terminologies.

Today I am often required to speak in Kokborok on scientific or technical topics to my students or general gatherings of

Kokborok speakers. And I face the same difficulty of not having appropriate standardised terminologies.

It may, however, be mentioned here that the problem of scientific and technical terminology is faced by the writers of almost all the Indian languages. Science writing is more than hundred years old in Bengali. Great writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Akshoy Kumar Datta, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy, Satyen Bose have written scientific articles in Bengali. In many cases they created or coined their own terminologies. But it can not be said that the problem of terminology has been finally solved in Bengali.

Why is it necessary to write on Science in kokborok ?

One can rightly ask "what is the necessity of writing science subject matter in kokborok". Writing for whom? Who will read?

According to the present Education Policy, children in the primary classes are to get their education in their mother tongues. It is, therefore, necessary to write science books in kokborok for the kokborok speaking primary class students of the state.

Secondly science has to be written in kokborok for the great majority of kokborok speakers who live in our hills and villages and do not know any other language. According to Article 51A of our constitution one of the fundamental duties of a citizen is "to develop the scientific temper". One can develop the scientific temper either by reading books and writings on science, or by being told about it. It is for this also books in kokborok on science are necessary.

Prerequisites for writing science in Kokborok

To be able to write science in Kok borok it is necessary that there is a stock of standardised Kok borok terminology for all significant scientific terms. Similar problem existed for Bengali

also. And to solve the problem the Calcutta University appointed a committee. After long discussion the committee published a list of standard terminologies. Till today nothing like this has been done for kokborok.

Let us examine the problem in little more detail. In every language there are many words that have more than one meanings. This is true for kokborok as well.

Let us take the word ফান. Concise kokborok - English-Bengali Dictionary compiled by Sri Binoy Deb Barma gives the following meanings against the word :-

Power, Strength, Force, শক্তি

But in science "Power", "Strength", "Force" and "শক্তি" are four different things having well defined meanings.

In the Bengali to kokborok Dictionary of Sri N. C. Deb Barma ফান has shown to mean বল, that is force and শক্তি that is energy.

In the textbooks of science published by the Tribal Language cell of the Education Department the word ফান has been used to mean FORCE, the standard Bengali equivalent of which is বল. So the kokborok word ফান should be kept reserved to mean only force.

So far as Science writing is concerned the word ôÂ±ð should not be used in any other sense in kokborok even if it has many more meanings.

Let us examine another word সামুঙ. Sri Binoy Deb Barma's Dictionary gives its meaning as -

Work, function, কাজ, অনুষ্ঠান.

The Dictionary of Manoranjan Majumder gives its meaning as -

কাজ, duty চাকুরী, job, employment.

But in science, “work” has a single and special meaning. Work is said to be done when a force moves a body by certain distance. The Tribal Language Cell published text books have used the word সামুঙ to mean work. In the kokborok list of terminology, সামুঙ should then be kept reserved to mean work only.

Let us now consider the term ENERGY. In Bengali, the equivalent is শক্তি . Sri Binoy Deb Barma’s Anglo kokborok Bengali Dictionary gives the meaning of Energy as -

Phan, tangphan, উদ্যম শক্তি, শক্তি

The Kok Borok-English-Bengali Dictionary of Sri Deb Barma says phan means-

Power, Strength, Force, শক্তি.

This Dictionary does not contain the word Tangphan.

The Class IV textbook uses the word রাগমুঙ for energy, but the class V textbook uses the Bengali equivalent শক্তি for energy.

All these I mentioned here only to impress the kokborok experts should immediately sit together and take up the work of preparing a list of standardised Kokborok terminologies for all commonly used scientific terms. These words will be accepted by all concerned as the standard terms. Those who will write books, articles on science, will use these words in the prescribed sense only.

How to finalise the standard kokborok terms?

How the kokborok terms should be selected or formed is a very vital question. It is beyond my competence to suggest any way. In Bengali standard scientific terms are formed by freely using Sanskrit words.

Example :

Velocity	-	বেগ
Acceleration	-	ত্বরণ
Inertia	-	জাড্য
Circuit	-	বর্তনী, ইত্যাদি

But what should kokborok do ? Some scientific terms can be properly represented by using pure kokborok words.

Example :

Force	-	ফান
Work	-	সামুঙ
Air	-	নকবার
Monsoon	-	বয়্যার

But the Sanskrit treasure house may not be useful for Kok Borok. If we do not find a pure kokborok word to be taken as equivalent to any particular English Scientific term, attempts may be made to form new compound kokborok word as Sri Deb Barma has made the equivalent of electric fan as 'phliksip'.

There may be a second line of thought as well. After Class V, kakbarak speaking students will study through Bengali medium. If proper kokborok equivalent of any term is not available it may be helpful to accept the corresponding Bengali equivalent as kokborok equivalent. For instance, for the English term acceleration kokborok can adopt the Bengali term ত্বরণ.

In the textbooks of classes III, IV and V along with true kokborok terms, the Bengali equivalents may also be indicated.

This will make things more comfortable to the students when they go to class VI.

Example

Force	-	ফান (বল)
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Work - সামুঙ (কাজ)

Before I conclude, I once again beg to submit, that I do not have any authority to talk on the subject that I presented here but still I felt it necessary to represent for betterment of Kokborok.



*Tripuri traditional
flute & dram.*



Tripuri youth on chompreng

13

Some Highlights on Kok Borok

Nagendra Jamatia

Our Kok Borok language is in the 4th generation of Sino-Tibetan language family. First, Sino-Tibetan, then Tibeto-Burman, then Bodo and then Kok Borok. It is painful that our Kok Borok language was ever deprived, discriminated and neglected since long back. Yet it survives probably because of its great potentiality. Once Kok Borok had royal status in Maharaja's times. But gradually its position was degraded & lost its royal status during Maharaja's period .

Editor of Rajmala Kailash Chandra Sinha narrated the above historical fact as follows -

বাংলা ভাষার রাজকীয় মর্যাদা সমগ্র বাংলাদেশ কখনও দিতে পারেনি। কিন্তু সেই সুদূর অতীত থেকেই ত্রিপুরা দিয়েছে। যদিও ত্রিপুরার মূল অধিবাসী এবং ত্রিপুরার রাজ বংশের মাতৃভাষা বাংলা নয়।

কিন্তু ত্রিপুরার নিজস্ব ভাষা, যে ভাষাকে ভাষাচার্য্য সুনীতি কুমার চট্টোপাধ্যায় বোড়ো ভাষা গোষ্ঠীর অংশীদার বলে অভিহিত করেছেন। সেই ককবরক ভাষার লিখিত ভাষার লিখিত ব্যবহার অষ্টাদশ শতকেও ছিল। বাংলা হরফে ককবরক ভাষার ব্যবহার অষ্টাদশ শতকের প্রথম অংশেও ছিল। একটি পুঁথিতে সেই সময়ে ভাষায় যথেষ্ট পরিণত ব্যবহার দেখে বিশ্বাসের কারণ থাকে যে, এর বহু আগে থেকেই সাহিত্য কাজেও ককবরক ভাষার

প্রচলন ছিল। কিন্তু তার পরের ইতিহাস ভিন্নতর। (সম্পাদকীয় নিবেদন, গ পৃষ্ঠা দশ।)

After merger with India, position of Kokborok further deteriorated. Borok people were afraid of speaking their mother tongue in public place specially in town.... in front of men. Even Borok students had to face humiliation in school premises. However things changed gradually after continuous movements launched by students and youths. Finally Kokborok got Govt.. recognition as 2nd official language in 1979.

According to Sri Kumud Kundu Choudhury, renowned Kokborok research scholar, our kokborok is the 4th kin of Sino Tibetan Tibeto Burman and then Bodo language of kokborok. Kokborok means the language of Kokborok speaking community.

So far written books are available in Kokborok : kokborok came into a written form as early as in 1897 and the writer of the book was a non-kokborok speaking person. He was Doulat Ahmed. There after Radha Mohan Thakur's book Kokborokma was published in 1900. Sri Kumud Kundu Choudhury in his famous book 'kokborok Bhasha O Sahitya' quoted from the political Agent's report as follows — 'The Jubaraj (Radha Kishore) is still engaged in compilation of a Tipperah- Bengali Dictionary, and he has of late become a member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal'. (Administration Report of the political Agency, Hill Tipperah-for the year 1976-77, vol-1 page -103) a dated 17th July 1877 from C W Bolton. The same was reported by the then political agent T.E. Coxhead. Also, as I quote. "The Jubaraj has, more over, at my suggestion, set about the compilation of a Tipperah vocabulary. He is perfectly acquainted with the vernacular of the hill people." (Administration report - Vol-1 pages 78—A Report form T. E. coxhead dated 26th June 1876) Unfortunately the text was not found either in the form of print or in manuscript. Right now what we have, is the written copy

of Doulat Ahmed, that is why now we are celebrating hundred years of Kok Borok. Now we have many scholars. Because of their dedicated endeavour and contribution.

Now Kokborok has a number of written and printed books which have come out. I don't want to refer the individual name of the writers of those books. But I must say that these are adequate to the demands of the present age. I convey my heart felt thanks to them.

But we cannot think what we have is enough. We must fill up all gaps and voids. Among the main reasons of the slow progress of Kokborok literature, one is definitely the script controversy. The debate is many with the choices of Roman script or Bengali script for writing Kokborok. It is so strong that none can accept the others. It is painful to continue for 40 years with a problem without solving it.

Are the kokborok novels are as popular as the songs? Do we have regular journals in kokborok? There is no reason to feel complacent at the rate of progress.

To my opinion we have to have single script not two. I am ready to accept any one for greater benefit of kokborok. We have examples before us.

As we find Manipur adopted one, Bodo accepted Devanagari unanimously and Mizos and Khasis Roman. We should also unanimously accept script for Kokborok. In case of Borok the scripts debate may be finalised by organisations like Bodo Sahitya Sabha and the sahitya Front. We must also have a machinery to settle the debate. We must do it for greater interest. I feel that we should change our mentality and should not waste time any further.

Bhasa commission headed by Pabitra Sarkar found Roman script popular in their survey. Our ancestors, even ourselves,

read the Ramayana and the Mahasharata in Bengali script. It is familiar to us. Then why majority of the society is favouring Roman script ? I think there is some advantage in print and media. Whatever it be, we have to choose a script early. Surprisingly, every one is taking part loudly in the debate whether he knows the language or not! No other language would allow it. I love my language and respect it. Kokborok has great potential of word formation from roots. Worthy people are working for it. It is certain to develop. We have started education. We are still far way for business sphere. We have to go fast.

My suggestions for the development of kokborok are :-

1. Extensive use of kokborok in primary schools as a medium of instruction,
 2. Kokborok to be introduced in High/Higher secondary school as a language even in college and university level .
 3. To Publish the recommendations of Tripura Upajati Bhasha Commission under the chairmanship of Pabitra Sarkar.
 4. Extensive use in print and Electronic media.
 5. Use in writing letters / communicating by kokborok among the users.
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PART - III

FIELD BASED REPORT

STATUS OF KOK-BOROK AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN THE STATE

H. L. Chakraborty, IAS

Kok Borok is the language of around eight lakhs of people in Tripura. The language is now being taught in primary level. The objective of the Govt. is to teach this language as medium of instruction up to University. The latest information are compiled and presented in brief.

1. Tripura is one of the small states situated in the North-East Region of the Country.
2. It's area is 10,486 Sq. k.m. At present, the population of Tripura is 31,91,168 as per census report of 2001 and the tribal population of Tripura is 9,93,426.
3. The State Government aimed at providing a primary school to each habitation for children within a walkable distance from the home.
4. In Tripura, there are 19 (nineteen) groups of tribal communities out of them Kok-Borok is the mother tongue of 8(eight) tribal groups.
5. In the year 1979, the Government of Tripura recognised Kok-Borok as a State Language. The Government of Tripura also introduced it as a medium of instruction in primary education from classes I-V in the year 1980.
6. Now, primary education in TTAADC area is being looked after by TTAADC. In the year 1996 Kok-Borok language was *

introduced as a subject in classes from VI to XII. At present, this language is being taught as a subject from classes VI to XII.

- 7 In the year 2001, the first batch of students appeared in Kok-Borok language subject in Madhyamik final examination and in the year 2003, first time, students appeared in H.S.(+2) examination in Kok-Borok language subject under TBSE.

- 8 Number of schools where Kok-Borok is being taught as a medium of instruction from classes I to V:-

Under State Government :- 72

Under TTAADC :- 1,344

Number of student under TTAADC :-

1. Class I :- 40,944 Nos.

2. Class II :- 20,380 Nos.

3. Class III :- 20,031 Nos.

4. Class IV :- 16380 Nos.

5. Class V :- 12,722 Nos.

* **Number of Kok-Borok teachers/ MPKBT : 2,470.**

* **Number of Trained Teachers : 2,260.**

* **Number of untrained teachers : 210.**

Qualification of teachers :-

a) KBT :- Madhyamik pass.

b) MPKBT :- Madhyamik plucked.

* Number of schools where Kok-Borok is being taught as a subject from classes

VI to XII. : 21.

Provision of Scholarship and Stipend :-

a) ST Boys : Book grant.

b) ST Girls : Book grant and Dress grant.

c) Boarding facilities : Boys and Girls.

* **Source of instructional materials :**

Text books for primary stage are prepared and published by TBSE from the year 2005. Before 2005, all books of Kok-Borok were prepared and published by Tribal Language Cell, SCERT. All text books of Kok-Borok language subject from classes VI to XII are being prepared and published by TBSE as per syllabus and curriculum. There is no shortage of Kok-Borok text books at present.

All text books from classes I to XII are being prepared in Bengali scripts.

* Like other problems in Education, dropout is a major problem, in Kok-Borok Education. A comparative picture will speak the position:

Classes I to V :

Others		S.T.	
Boys	16.94%	Boys	24.70%
Girls	17.62%	Girls	24.99%

Classes I to VIII :

Others		S.T.	
Boys	26.91 %	Boys	31.45%
Girls	25.71%	Girls	31.24%

Classes I to IX :

Others		S.T.	
Boys	58.18%	Boys	69.19%
Girls	64.17%	Girls	70.85%

Teachers' training :

At present, in-service KBTs and MPKBTs are being trained through 6 month course at DIET, Agartala and DIET, Kakraban. The intake capacity of 2 (two) DIETs for training of MPKBTs are as follows:

1. DIET Agartala -MPKBT -100 per year.
2. DIET Kakraban -MPKBT -100 per year.

Apart from this, short course training programme (10 days) are also being conducted at SCERT for KBTs/ MPKBTs.

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ROLE OF SCERT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF KOK BOROK

Sri. K. D. Nath,

S CERT has come into existence by an order of the Government on 23.3.1991 by merging 4 (four) Unit of Education Directorate under a common umbrella. The Units are State Institute of Education. Tribal Language Cell (TLC), Educational Publication Unit and Bureau of Education & Vocational Guidance.

Tribal Language Cell is one of the oldest unit working independently for development of different Tribal Languages in the State since last three decades. It is transpired that in the year 1973 Tribal Language Cell was established in the State under Directorate of School Education. A group of 4 deputed teachers from Kok Borok and Bengali started their work in College Tilla. A post was created which is known as pilot Project Officer and Mr. Satish Thakur had worked in the past. Subsequently Mrs. Papia Debbarma and Sri B. K. Goswami were also inducted to carry out research work for development of tribal language in the state. In Tripura 19 tribes and sub-

tribes are residing for centuries. As per Census Report of 1991, it is found that several tribal languages were in existence in the state since the rule of Manikya dynasty. A historic moment is created at the time of partition of India, particularly in North-Eastern Region which is remotest and far flung from the mainland both topographical and globally located in the strategic point. Once the silent history awoke in this area and started speaking in a new dialogue. After partition people of erstwhile East Pakistan, most of them are Bangalees, took shelter in this hilly region. Consequently upon the partition of Indo-Bangla and after merging of the Royal Kingdom to the Union of India on 15th October, 1949 the Hindu People of Bangladesh flocked to Tripura, basically indigenous tribal welcomed all and helped to settle in this hilly State. Then people of both the community, i.e. Tribal and Bangalee started living in an understanding in the peaceful ideal of coexistence. After the promulgation of Constitution of India on 26th January, 1950, the Indigenous people of the State become the members of the schedule and recognized as Scheduled Tribe. Contradiction in the universal dictum of the society.

A good section of the Hindu-Bengali people of erstwhile Pakistan realized that East Pakistan would not be conducive for their survival, as a result they started leaving East Pakistan in group and flocked to nearby states. Influx of Bengalee people increased after 1950 in the state of Tripura. It may be a demand of the history. After that much water had flown through Howrah, Gomati, Dhalai, Manu and Juri during last five decades and during the period identity crisis in the mind of the indigenous tribal people also peeped and they raised their voice in many dimensions including demand to express their identity in their mother tongue. Before 19th January, 1979, Bengali and English were the Official language of the State. The 1st

Left Front Government recognized Kok Borok as official language on 19th January, 1979. The Bill was passed in the floor of Assembly. In 1980 a policy decision was taken by the Council of Ministers to implement Kok Borok, as a medium of instruction in the primary level and also as official language.

It is already mentioned that there are 19 Tribal Communities having their separate mother tongue. It is the birth right of every child to speak in its mother tongue. The international Community is also advocating the same theory across the globe. As per charter of UNO, 10th December is being observed as Human Rights of the world and I consider this is the first right of the human being. The scholars, the intellectual members of the society also thought that down trodden tribal people should also be brought to the lime light and medium of instruction should be in their own mother tongue. The new thinking of the generation united the thoughts of the elite and advanced people of the State. On this background, research on different tribal languages started by the eminent scholars. They found that though there are 19 tribal communities but they are communicating their views only in 7/8 mother tongue. These scholars also identified 8 (eight) tribal communities expressing themselves in a very common dialect, they are Tripuri, Noatia, Reang, Jamatia, Kolai, Rupini, Murasingh, Uchai. The common dialects of these eight communities were brought into a common frame of language and that is titled as Kok Borok. Besides this, there are other tribal communities who have their own independent mother tongue. They are Chakma, Mog, Halam-Kuki, Mizo, Garo and Santal.

The following tables show the statistics on language-wise population and statistics on total population and literacy rate of tribal communities as per 1991 census.

**STATISTICS ON LANGUAGE-WISE
POPULATION AS PER 1991 CENSUS.**

Sl. No.	Name of Language	No. of Population in village	No. of population in town	Total No of population	No. of population between 6 and 15 years of age.
1.	Kok Borok	637913	9934	647847	149000
2.	Chakma	94587	663	95250	21907
3.	Mog	27924	42	27966	6432
4.	Halam	24039	84	24123	5548
5.	Garo	8893	163	9056	2082
6.	Lusai/Mizo	4480	88	4568	1050
7.	Kuki	1164	08	1173	269
8.	Munda & Santal	15290	135	16891	3884

**STATISTICS ON TOTAL POPULATION AND LITERACY
RATE OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AS PER 1991 CENSUS.**

	Total	Male	Female
All ages	853385	434225	419120
Illiterate	577889	250290	327799
Literate	143921	92594	51318
Primary level	70241	46712	23529
Madhyamik stage	44681	31604	13077
CHAKMA			
All ages	96096	48886	47210
Illiterate	73425	32949	40025
Literate	11599	7846	3753
Primary level	6017	4127	1890
Madhyamik stage	3682	2537	1145

GARO			
All ages	9173	4636	4537
Illiterate	5285	2294	2991
Literate	2000	1126	874
Primary level	1124	682	442
Madhyamik stage	672	452	220
HALAM			
All ages	36499	18462	18037
Illiterate	26158	11417	14741
Literate	6060	3938	2122
Primary level	2494	1780	714
Madhyamik stage	1122	873	249
KUKI			
All ages	10628	5451	5177
Illiterate	5988	2512	3476
Literate	2233	1330	309
Primary level	1248	776	472
Madhyamik stage	703	502	201
LUSAI			
All ages	4910	2512	2338
Illiterate	1398	646	752
Literate	1207	582	625
Primary level	986	506	480
Madhyamik stage	863	478	385
MOG			
All ages	31612	16242	15370
Illiterate	24363	11274	13089
Literate	4025	2730	1295
Primary level	1785	1224	561
Madhyamik stage	878	610	168

TRIPURI			
All ages	461531	234853	226678
Illiterate	291440	122836	168601
Literate	85889	54299	31590
Primary level	44939	28803	15336
Madhyamik stage	29690	20731	8959
JAMATIA			
All ages	60824	30517	30307

Tribal Language Cell has written books on different titles from class I to XII as per syllabus framed by the TBSE. As per report, all the primary schools under TTAADC have been identified for teaching Kok Borok from class I to V as an independent language. In classes VI to XII Kok Borok has been introduced in 21 schools of the State as mother tongue for Kok Borok speaking students. Besides this, Kok Borok is being taught as a separate language in 1344 schools of ADC and 72 schools under the Government of Tripura. As per report 2490 Kok Borok teachers are teaching Kok Borok in different schools. It is also reported that in ADC 110457 students are studying Kok Borok from class I to V. It is also decided by the TTAADC that Kok Borok language will be introduced from class I from the year 2006 as medium of instruction. In classes III to V besides Kok Borok, Mathematics, science and Social studies also will be introduced in Kok Borok language. Class wise position of ST students are shown in the following table.

CLASS ENROLMENT OF ST STUDENTS
(Year : 2005-06)

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	TOTAL	
									I-V	VI-VIII
TOTAL	58002	43933	40167	35069	30617	25606	20786	16024	207788	62416
MALE	30350	23122	21672	19094	17030	14131	11217	8828	111268	34176
FEMALE	27652	20811	18495	15975	13587	11475	9569	7196	96520	28240
%	48.61	44.09	39.08	37.23	36.31	32.95	31.96	29.43	41.53	31.65

On the other, Chakma language has been introduced in classes I and II in schools of the State and there is a separate wing for development of Chakma language in SCERT. Government has also decided to introduce Halam-Kuki as a separate language for their community. There is an endeavour for introduction of Mog language as separate language but till date no prescribed written form of Mog language is available. Consequently, this language could not be introduced. I have already shown the language-wise picture of different tribal communities. As per Census of India 2001, total tribal population of the state is 09,93,426. It is also observed that 60% population of tribal are using Kok Borok as their dialect or language of communication as a premier lingual franc. Kokborak definitely is very much popular to their own communities. But it is an undeniable fact that 11(eleven) tribal communities of this State have not their own script. Teaching in mother tongue is essential and this is the first birth right of every citizen. But we should not forget that for the development and competition in this global field we should learn modern languages also to have the place in the world to be established as a man of worth definition. It is a fact that no state can progress unless all of its citizens are equally developed. We all are to

keep pace with the time. It is definitely a demand of the age. Till now 33 titles in Kok Borok and 2 titles in Chakma language have been brought out for teaching Kok Borok and Chakma in the State. It is to be also mentioned that Mizo language is also being taught in this State with the approval of the TBSE in Jampui and Dasda Block.

The World is pacing very quickly. The people of third millennium in the state are also eagerly waiting for a bright prospective and radiating morning with a dream to raise their head and place their position within the International community. With a view to this, our state is also trying its level best to develop different Tribal languages for the development of all the ST communities to keep pace with others. Men cannot live in the den. In fact, we are living under the global sky. Our dream is also soaring high but we should not forget that emotional hurry for development of language is not the only solution. We should not think for a particular community. We should learn to go with all. We should think for man and mankind. We should think for society and social people. As medium of instruction if Tribal language is introduced, that will create major problem in future particularly in prosecuting higher studies. For this historic reason tribal people of the state should learn at least one more language with their mother tongue, which should be either English or Bengali for prosecuting higher studies. Otherwise they will not be able to proceed and succeed in the long run. Truth is stranger than fiction. We should not forget it. We should not think for today only. We should think for tomorrow.

ত্রিপুরায় উপজাতীয় ভাষার উন্নয়নের ধারা প্রকৃতি

বোধরায় দেববর্মা

শিক্ষার উৎকৃষ্ট মাধ্যম মাতৃভাষা। মাতৃভাষা মাতৃদুগ্ধসম। মাতৃভাষার মাধ্যমে শিক্ষা প্রত্যেক মানুষের মৌলিক মানবিক অধিকার। মাতৃভাষার মাধ্যমে শিক্ষার তুলনা হয় না। কিন্তু পৃথিবীর কোটি কোটি মানুষ বিভিন্ন কারণে মাতৃভাষার মাধ্যমে শিক্ষার সুযোগ থেকে বঞ্চিত। অতীতেও একই ঘটনা আমরা লক্ষ্য করি। ভারতবর্ষের কথাই ধরা যাক। বৈদিক যুগে শিক্ষার অধিকার কেবলমাত্র ব্রাহ্মণদেরই ছিল। ব্রাহ্মণ ছাড়া নিম্নবর্ণের কারোর শিক্ষার অধিকার ছিল না। এই শিক্ষার মাধ্যমও ছিল আর্য ভাষা। ব্রাহ্মণরা ধর্মশাস্ত্র এবং ক্ষত্রিয়রা অস্ত্র ও যুদ্ধবিদ্যা শিখতেন। একলব্য নিম্নবর্ণ ব্যাসের সন্তান বলে অস্ত্রগুরু দ্রোণাচার্য তাকে অস্ত্রবিদ্যা শেখান নি। আজ থেকে প্রায় ২৫০০ বছর আগের কথা। বুদ্ধদেব তার ধর্মমত ভারতের বিভিন্ন প্রদেশে প্রচার করতে গিয়ে ভাষা সমস্যায় পড়েছিলেন। তখন তিনি শিষ্যদের বললেন — সন্ধ্যা নীরুত্তিয়া অর্থাৎ জনগণের যে ভাষা, সেই ভাষাতেই যেন ধর্ম প্রচার করা হয়। অর্থাৎ মাতৃভাষায় একটি বিষয় যত সহজে শেখা যায় অন্য ভাষায় শেখা যায় না। বিষয়টি সেদিন বুদ্ধদেব উপলব্ধি করতে পেরেছিলেন।

১২০০ খ্রিস্টাব্দের আগে বঙ্গ দেশের জনগণ ছিলেন হিন্দু ধর্মাবলম্বী। সেসময় হিন্দু জ্যোতির্বিদ্যা শিখতেন। শিক্ষার মাধ্যম ছিল সংস্কৃত। তখন বাঙালির মাতৃভাষা বাংলাই ছিল। ১২০০ খ্রিস্টাব্দের পর বাংলায় মুসলিম আগমন হলে মকতব, মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষার প্রচলন হয়। ধর্মাস্তরিত বাংলাভাষী মুসলিম শিক্ষার্থীরা মকতব, মাদ্রাসায় ধর্মীয় শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করতেন। সেখানে শিক্ষার মাধ্যম ছিল আরবী। মোগল যুগেও বাংলায় দুটি শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা প্রচলিত ছিল একদিকে টোল ও গুরুকুল, অন্যদিকে মকতব ও মাদ্রাসা। টোল

ও গুরুকুল শিক্ষার মাধ্যম হল সংস্কৃত এবং মকতব ও মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষার মাধ্যম হল আরবী। যারা এই শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে শিক্ষাগ্রহণ করতেন তাদের মাতৃভাষা হল বাংলা। ভারতের অন্যান্য প্রদেশেও একই চিত্র লক্ষ্য করা যায়। সেকালে উচ্চ শিক্ষার কেন্দ্রস্থল হল নবদ্বীপ, কাশী, মথুরা ও বৃন্দাবন। এখন যুগ পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শিক্ষার বিষয়বস্তুতেও পরিবর্তন এসেছে। এখন ভারতীয়দের উচ্চশিক্ষার কেন্দ্রস্থল হল আমেরিকা ও ইংল্যান্ড।

অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দীর মধ্যভাগে ইংরেজরা ভারতবর্ষে আসে। ইংরেজ আগমনের পর ভারতের শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থায় আধুনিক যুগের শুরু। শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থায় বিরাট পরিবর্তন লক্ষ্য করা যায়। ইংরেজি শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থাই বর্তমান ভারতবর্ষে চালু রয়েছে। এই শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থার বৈশিষ্ট্য হল - শিক্ষা হবে একটি নির্দিষ্ট বিদ্যালয় গৃহে। প্রত্যেক শ্রেণীর জন্য থাকবে একটি শ্রেণীকক্ষ ও প্রতি বিষয়ের জন্য period এর ব্যবস্থা থাকবে। প্রতি period এক ঘন্টা পড়বে। বিদ্যালয় চলবে দিনে নির্দিষ্ট সময়সীমার মধ্যে। বিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষার্থীদের থাকবে নির্দিষ্ট পোশাক। বিষয় ও পাঠক্রমেও (Subject ও Syllabus) বিরাট পরিবর্তন লক্ষ্য করা যায়। ইংরেজি, অঙ্ক, ইতিহাস, ভূগোল, সমাজবিদ্যা, বিজ্ঞান ইত্যাদি বিষয়ের প্রত্যেক শ্রেণীর জন্য আলাদা আলাদা পুস্তক থাকবে। সবই হচ্ছে পাশ্চাত্যের ধাঁচে। এখানে শিক্ষার মাধ্যম হল ইংরেজি। উচ্চশিক্ষার মাধ্যমও ইংরেজি, মাতৃভাষার কোন স্থান ছিল না। এর মানে হল ইংরেজদের শাসনকালেও ভারতবর্ষের জনগণ মাতৃভাষায় শিক্ষার সুযোগ থেকে বঞ্চিত। ১৮৩৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে লর্ড মেকলের সুপারিশ অনুযায়ী ইংরেজ আমলে ভারতের মাতৃভাষাসমূহ অত্যন্ত প্রত্যেক প্রদেশের প্রত্যন্ত এলাকায় ইংরেজি শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা নিয়ে যাওয়ার চেষ্টা করে এবং নিয়ে গেছেও। আমরা ভারতীয়রা ৩০০ বছর ধরে ইংরেজি ভাষা ও তাদের শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থাকে শ্রদ্ধা করেছি এবং শ্রদ্ধার সঙ্গে ইংরেজি ভাষা শিখেছি। ইংরেজি ভাষা শিখে, দক্ষতা অর্জন করে গর্ববোধ করেছি। ইংরেজি জানা লোককে শ্রদ্ধার চোখে দেখেছি। এই মনোভঙ্গির কিন্তু এখনো কোন পরিবর্তন হয়নি। এক্ষেত্রে ইংরেজি ভাষা আজ আমাদের জাতীয় জীবনের গভীরে শিকড় গেড়ে বসেছে। ইংরেজি আজ আমাদের জাতীয় যোগাযোগের একমাত্র মাধ্যম। যদিও এটি হল ভারতীয় ইংরেজী (Indian English) ইংরেজি ভাষা আমরা যতটুকু জানি, বলতে পারি - পাশের বাড়ির ভাষা, অহমিয়া, বোড়ো, ওড়িয়া, তামিল, তেলেগু- জানিনা, বলতে পারি না। তাদের সাহিত্যের খবরও রাখি না। অথচ হাজার বছরেরও বেশি সময় ধরে পাশাপাশি আছি। শিক্ষার মাধ্যম হিসেবে মাতৃভাষার গুরুত্ব প্রথম উপলব্ধি করতে পেরেছিলেন স্যার আশুতোষ মুখোপাধ্যায় এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর। ১৯০৫ থেকে ১৯৪৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দ সময়ের মধ্যে বাংলাদেশকে কেন্দ্র করে জাতীয় শিক্ষা আন্দোলন (National Education Movement) গড়ে উঠেছিল মূলত দুটি দাবিকে কেন্দ্র করেই। সেই দুটি দাবি হলো - (১)

শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে মাতৃভাষার গুরুত্বকে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে হবে। (২) মাধ্যমিক স্তরে শিক্ষার মাধ্যম হিসাবে মাতৃভাষাকে গ্রহণ করতে হবে। জাতীয় শিক্ষা আন্দোলনের চাপে ইংরেজ সরকার ১৯৩৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষা স্তরে মাতৃভাষাকে শিক্ষার মাধ্যম হিসাবে স্বীকৃতি দিতে বাধ্য হয়েছিল। তখন থেকেই মাতৃভাষা বাংলা, মাধ্যমিক স্তর পর্যন্ত শিক্ষার মাধ্যম হিসেবে ব্যবহৃত হচ্ছে।

ভারত স্বাধীন হল। সংবিধান রচনা হল। সংবিধানে ভারতের রাষ্ট্রভাষা কী হবে, অফিসের ভাষা (Official Language) কী হবে তার উল্লেখ রয়েছে। আবার সংখ্যালঘু ভাষাসমূহের অধিকার সম্পর্কেও উল্লেখ আছে। সংবিধানে অষ্টম তফশিলের ব্যবস্থা হল। ভারত বহুভাষী দেশ। অনেক ছোট ছোট অনুন্নত ভাষা সম্প্রদায় রয়েছে ভারতে। এখনো এইসব ভাষাগোষ্ঠীর জনগণ মাতৃভাষায় শিক্ষার সুযোগ থেকে বঞ্চিত। মাতৃভাষার মাধ্যমে প্রাথমিক ও মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষার অধিকার লিপিবদ্ধ রয়েছে সংবিধানে। এখনো সংবিধান স্বীকৃত এইসব অধিকার আন্দোলন করে, সংগ্রাম করে আদায় করতে হয়।

ত্রিপুরা ছোট হলেও বহুভাষী রাজ্য। এখানে অনেক ভাষা-গোষ্ঠীর জনগণ বাস করেন জনসংখ্যার বিচারে বাংলা রাজ্যের বড় ভাষা। এরপরই ককবরকের স্থান। বাংলা ও ককবরক এ রাজ্যের স্বীকৃত সরকারি ভাষা (Official Language)। এছাড়া আরো কয়েকটি ছোট ছোট ভাষা রয়েছে এ রাজ্যে। সেগুলো হল - চাকমা, মগ, হালাম, লুসাই, গারো, মইতই, বিষ্ণুপ্রিয়া। চা বাগানে ঝারা কাজ করেন তাদের ও আলাদা ভাষা আছে। এছাড়া ওড়ঙ, মুণ্ডা, তেলেঙ্গাভাষীও অল্প সংখ্যক রয়েছে এ রাজ্যে।

ত্রিপুরা ছিল মহারাজাদের শাসিত রাজ্য। ১৮৪ জন রাজা এ রাজ্য শাসন করেছেন বলে কথিত। ১৯৪৯ সালের ১৫ অক্টোবর ত্রিপুরা ভারতে যুক্ত হলে রাজ শাসনের অবসান হয়। মহারাজা শাসিত ত্রিপুরার শিক্ষা ছিল রাজপরিবার ও আগরতলা শহরে সীমাবদ্ধ। আগরতলায় ছিল হাতে গোণা কয়েকটি বিদ্যালয় - যেমন, উমাকান্ত একাডেমী, মহারানী তুলসীবতী বালিকা বিদ্যালয়, বিজয়কুমার বালিকা বিদ্যালয়, বোধজং স্কুল, আর উচ্চশিক্ষার জন্য মহারাজা বীর বিক্রম মহাবিদ্যালয়। তাছাড়া সীমান্ত সংলগ্ন এলাকা ও বাঙালি প্রধান শহর বা মহকুমা সদর দপ্তর উদয়পুর, খোয়াই, সোনামুড়া, বিলোনীয়া ইত্যাদিতে কয়েকটি বিদ্যালয় রয়েছে। প্রত্যন্ত বিস্তীর্ণ উপজাতি এলাকাগুলোতে শিক্ষার অস্তিত্ব ছিল না। ১৯৫০ ইংরেজির আগেও এ রাজ্যে সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ ছিলেন আদিবাসী উপজাতিরা। কেউ কেউ ১৯৩১, ৪১, ৫১ এর জনগণনার রিপোর্টকে ভিত্তি করে জনসংখ্যা বিচার করতে চান। প্রকৃতপক্ষে ঐ বছরগুলোতে জনগণনার রিপোর্টে প্রত্যন্ত উপজাতি এলাকার প্রকৃত জনসংখ্যার প্রতিফলন ঘটেনি। দুর্গম হলংসিকি, তীয়াসাকীথাং, দামরাকুরিদক ইত্যাদি অসংখ্য এলাকায় কোন কর্মচারী গণনার জন্য যেতে পেরেছিলেন? মহারাজার প্রত্যন্ত উপজাতি এলাকায় শিক্ষার কোনো ব্যবস্থা করেন নি। তাই শিক্ষার সাথে উপজাতি

সমাজের পরিচয় ছিল না বললেই হয়। বলা যায় অতীতে ককবরকভাষী বরক জাতির মধ্যে প্রথাগত শিক্ষার প্রচলন ছিল না। সমতলভূমিও জুম ভিত্তিক কৃষিই ছিল জীবন জীবিকার প্রধান উপায়। পড়াশোনা বা শিক্ষা বরকজাতির দৈনন্দিন জীবন চর্চার সঙ্গে অঙ্গীভূত ছিল না। ১৯৪৫ ইংরেজি থেকে এই অবস্থার পরিবর্তন ঘটে। ১৯৪৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে নব্য শিক্ষিত কয়েকজন উপজাতি তরুণ জনশিক্ষা সমিতি নামে একটি সমাজ সেবামূলক সংগঠন গড়ে তোলেন। এই সমিতির উদ্দেশ্য ছিল উপজাতি এলাকায় শিক্ষার আলাপৌছে দেওয়া। সমিতির নেতৃত্বে ছিলেন সুধদ্বা দেববর্মা, হেমন্ত দেববর্মা, দশরথ দেববর্মা, অখোর দেববর্মা, নীলমণি দেববর্মা প্রমুখ। তারা নিরক্ষর উপজাতিদের অন্ধকার ভবিষ্যৎ চিন্তা করে শঙ্কিত হয়েছিলেন। মহারাজের রক্ত চক্ষুকে উপেক্ষা করে ঐ জনশিক্ষা সমিতি গড়ে তোলা হয়। উপজাতি এলাকায় সমিতি কয়েক শত প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করে পরিচালনা করেন। তবে এসব বিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষার মাধ্যম ছিল বাংলা। কারণ সরকার অর্থাৎ মহারাজের বিষয়গুলোতে শিক্ষার মাধ্যম ছিল বাংলাই। মাতৃভাষা ককবরকে শিক্ষার কথা সেদিন চিন্তাও করতে পারেন নি সমিতির নেতৃত্ব। কারণ পরিস্থিতি পরিবেশ ককবরকের অনুকূলে ছিল না মোটেই। মহারাজারা বরক জাতিভুক্ত হলেও, তাদের মাতৃভাষা ককবরক হলেও তারা ছিলেন বাংলা ভাষার ভক্ত, বাংলা ব্যবহার ও চর্চা মহারাজের সরকারি নির্দেশ ছিল। এরূপ পরিস্থিতিতে ককবরকে শিক্ষার কথা চিন্তা করা যেত না। তাছাড়া ককবরক পাঠ্য পুস্তক ইত্যাদিরও বিরাট সমস্যা ছিল।

১৯৪৫ ইংরেজী ১৫ অক্টোবর ত্রিপুরা, ভারতের সঙ্গে যুক্ত হলে এই বিদ্যালয়গুলো সরকার দ্বারা অধিগৃহীত হয়। সরকার উপজাতি এলাকায় আরো অনেক প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করেন। বিদ্যালয়গুলোতে শিক্ষার মাধ্যম ছিল বাংলা। মাতৃভাষায় শিক্ষার ভাবনা তখনো ককবরকভাষী জনগণের মধ্যে দেখা যায়নি। এভাবেই দীর্ঘদিন উপজাতি এলাকার শিক্ষা চলতে থাকে। বরকজাতির মধ্যে সাক্ষরের হার, শিক্ষিতের সংখ্যা, ধীরে ধীরে বৃদ্ধি পেতে থাকে। ১৯৬৮ থেকে ১৯৭৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ সময়ে শিক্ষিত উপজাতি যুবসমাজের মধ্যে নব চেতনার উন্মেষ ঘটে। দাবি উঠে মাতৃভাষা ককবরকে শিক্ষা চাই অর্থাৎ শিক্ষার মাধ্যম মাতৃভাষা ককবরকে হতে হবে। ব্যাপক আন্দোলন শুরু হয় ১৯৭৪ ইংরেজিতে উপজাতিদের চার দফা দাবিতে। এই চারদফার মধ্যে অন্যতম দাবি হলো - উপজাতিদের মাতৃভাষায় শিক্ষালাভের ব্যবস্থা এবং ককবরককে ত্রিপুরার সরকারি ভাষার মর্যাদা দান। কিন্তু দাবিসমূহ পূরণ করা হয়নি।

১৯৭৮ ইংরেজিতে রাজ্যে নতুন বামফ্রন্ট সরকার গঠিত হয়। সরকার চার দফা দাবির সবকটিই পূরণ করে। ১৯৭৮ ইংরেজির গোড়া থেকেই রাজ্যের প্রায় ১০৫টি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে ককবরক পড়ানোর কাজ শুরু হয়ে যায় এবং ৮১ জনের মতো ককবরক শিক্ষক নিয়োগ করা হয়। আবার ১৯৭৯ ইং এর ১৯শে জানুয়ারী ককবরক ভাষাকে

রাজ্যের সরকারি ভাষা (Official Language) হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দেওয়া হয়। এখানে উল্লেখ করা দরকার ১৯৬৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দেই বাংলা ভাষাকে রাজ্যের ককবরক পড়ানোর কাজ সম্প্রসারিত করা হবে। প্রতি বছরই একটি একটি শ্রেণী করে ককবরককে উপরের দিকে নিয়ে যাওয়া হবে। অর্থাৎ ককবরককে পড়ানোর বিষয়টি উপরের শ্রেণিতে সম্প্রসারিত করা হবে। সে অনুযায়ী পাঠ্য পুস্তক রচনার কাজও হয়। ষষ্ঠ শ্রেণী থেকে মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চতর মাধ্যমিক স্তর পর্যন্ত ককবরক পড়ানোর কাজ সম্প্রসারিত করা হবে। এই রকমই ছিল সরকারি ঘোষণা ও পরিকল্পনা। ১৯৮২ এবং ১৯৮৫ ইংরেজিতে ত্রিপুরা উপজাতি এলাকা স্বশাসিত জেলা পরিষদ গঠিত হলে - জেলা পরিষদ এলাকায় যতগুলি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় ছিল, সেগুলোর প্রশাসনিক দায়িত্ব জেলা পরিষদের হাতে তুলে দেওয়া। এখন স্ব-শাসিত জেলা পরিষদ ১৩৪৬টি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় পরিচালনা করেন। স্ব-শাসিত জেলা পরিষদে এখন ২০০০ জন ককবরক শিক্ষক রয়েছেন। রাজ্য সরকার পরিচালিত ৭২টি বিদ্যালয়ে ককবরক পড়ানোর সিদ্ধান্ত থাকলেও এখনও পড়ানো হচ্ছে না। এখন মে মাস চলছে। আবার একশটি বিদ্যালয়ে ককবরক ভাষাকে, ভাষা বিষয় (Language) হিসাবে চালু করার সিদ্ধান্ত রয়েছে। সেই সিদ্ধান্ত বা সার্কুলারের নির্দেশ এখনো কার্যকরী করা হয়নি। বর্তমানে রাজ্য সরকারের ২৪৭০ জন ককবরক শিক্ষক রয়েছেন। এখন তাদেরকে দিয়ে বাংলা পড়ানো হচ্ছে।

এখন রাজ্য বা স্ব-শাসিত জেলা পরিষদ এলাকার কোন বিদ্যালয়ে ককবরক পড়ানো হয় না। কেবলমাত্র খোয়াই -এর রতনপুর দ্বাদশ শ্রেণী বিদ্যালয়ে দ্বাদশ শ্রেণী পর্যন্ত ককবরক পড়ানো হয়। তাও একটি ভাষা বিষয় (Language-subject) হিসাবেই পড়ানো হয়। তবে স্বশাসিত জেলা পরিষদ এ বছর থেকে নতুন পাঠ্যগ্রন্থ রচনা করে প্রথম শ্রেণীতে ককবরক ও অষ্ট পড়ানোর কাজ শুরু করেছে। আগামী বছর দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণীতে পড়ানোর পরিকল্পনা রয়েছে। এখন ত্রিপুরা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ককবরককে এক বছরের ডিপ্লোমা কোর্স চালু আছে।

মাতৃভাষা ককবরক শিক্ষার ভুল -ত্রুটিগুলো এখনো গভীরভাবে পর্যালোচনা হচ্ছে না। দুর্বলতাগুলো দূর করে সেখান থেকে বেরিয়ে আসা দরকার। যে যে বিদ্যালয়ে ককবরক চালু হওয়ার কথা সেখানে এখনো কেন চালু হচ্ছে না এবং কিভাবে চালু করা যায় তার জন্য এসব বিদ্যালয় পরিদর্শন করে ককবরক চালুর ব্যবস্থা করা দরকার।

ককবরক শিক্ষা সমস্যা :

১৯৮৮ ইংরেজীতে যে উৎসাহ ও উদ্দীপনা নিয়ে ককবরকের জয়যাত্রা শুরু হয়েছিল তা বেশি দিন স্থায়ী হয়নি। কিছুদিনের মধ্যেই ককবরক শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে নানা

সমস্যা দেখা দেয় এবং ককবরক পড়ানোর কাজ বন্ধ হয়ে যায়। এখন সর্বত্র ককবরক পঠন পঠন বন্ধ। মাতৃভাষা ককবরক শিক্ষায় কোন সাফল্য আসে নি।

* রাজ্য সরকারের বা জেলা পরিষদের সুস্পষ্ট কোন ভাষা নীতি (Language Policy) ছিল না, এখনও নেই।

* রাজ্য সরকার ও জেলা পরিষদের শিক্ষানীতি (Education Policy) নেই। যা আছে তাও ত্রুটিপূর্ণ।

* প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে ককবরক চালু করার আগেই পরিকল্পনা নেওয়ার দরকার ছিল - শুধু মাতৃভাষা হিসাবে একটি বিষয় (Subject) পড়ানো হবে, না অন্যান্য বিষয় অঙ্ক, বিজ্ঞান, সমাজবিদ্যা- এগুলোও ককবরকে পড়ানো হবে।

* ককবরকের জন্য যে বইগুলি ছাপানো হয়েছিল তার বিষয়বস্তুতে অনেক ত্রুটি ছিল। পাঠ্য পুস্তকগুলো ককবরকভাষী শিশুদের উপযোগী ছিল না। পাঠক্রমে যথেষ্ট গলদ ছিল।

* মাধ্যমিক অনুত্তীর্ণ ককবরক যুবকদের ককবরক শিক্ষক হিসাবে নিয়োগ করা হলেও তাদের যথাযথ প্রশিক্ষণের কোনো ব্যবস্থা ছিল না।

* ককবরক শিক্ষকরা বাংলা মাধ্যমের ছাত্র হওয়ায় ককবরক পড়াতে যথেষ্ট অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হয়েছিলেন। ককবরকে অঙ্ক, বিজ্ঞান ইত্যাদি বিষয় পড়ানোর কাজ যথেষ্টই শক্ত।

* ককবরক পড়িয়া ছাত্র এবং যারা ককবরক পড়াচ্ছেন তারা কী কী সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হচ্ছেন সে বিষয়ে ঘন ঘন আলোচনা করে সমস্যাগুলোকে সমাধানের কোনো চেষ্টা করা হয়নি।

* ককবরক পড়িয়া ছাত্র অভিভাবকদের মধ্যে অনেকেরই অভিযোগ (অবশ্য কোনো কোনো অঞ্চলের) - ছাপা ককবরক দুর্বোধ্য, ভাষা ও শব্দের অর্থ বোঝা যায় না। তাদের মুখের ভাষার সাথে ছাপার ভাষার মিল নেই। বিশেষ করে এসব অভিযোগ এসেছে রিয়াং উপভাষা সম্প্রদায়ের ছাত্র-অভিভাবকদের কাছ থেকে।

* ১ম থেকে ৫ম শ্রেণীর পাঠ্য পুস্তক রচনা ও পাঠক্রম রচনার জন্য কোন কমিটি ছিল না। যারা ছিলেন, তারা ততটা অভিজ্ঞ ছিলেন না।

* বাংলা লিপিতে ককবরক লেখার ক্ষেত্রে ককবরকের কোন বানান নীতি ছিল না। যার ফলে বানানে বিশৃঙ্খলা দেখা যায়। একটি শব্দের বানান এক বইয়ে এক একরকম।

* বিদ্যালয়ে ককবরক শিক্ষার জন্য পাঠ্য রচনা পাঠক্রম তৈরি করা, শিক্ষকদের প্রশিক্ষণ ইত্যাদি পরিকল্পনা রচনার জন্যও কোন স্থায়ী কমিটি, কর্মী, কর্মী বাহিনী সর্বক্ষণের জন্য (whole time working group) ছিল না।

* ঘন ঘন সরকার বদল এবং ককবরক শিক্ষার নীতি বদল, ককবরক শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে *

অনেক ব্যাঘাত সৃষ্টি করেছে।

* ককবরক শিক্ষার্থীরা পঞ্চম শ্রেণীর শিক্ষা শেষ করে ষষ্ঠ শ্রেণীতে ভর্তি হওয়ার সময় বাংলা মাধ্যম বিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তি হতে হয়েছে। কারণ ষষ্ঠ শ্রেণীতে ককবরক পড়ানোর পরিকাঠামো তখনও তৈরীই হয়নি (পাঠ্য পুস্তকের অভাব, শিক্ষকের অভাব ইত্যাদি)। স্বভাবতই ককবরক মাধ্যমের ছাত্ররা বাংলা মাধ্যম বিদ্যালয়ে ভাষা সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হয় এবং পাশ করতে পারেনি, drop out বেড়ে যায়। এ পরিস্থিতিতে অভিভাবকরা ছেলেমেয়েদের ককবরক মাধ্যম বিদ্যালয়ে পড়াতে চান নি।

* এইসব সমস্যার কারণে আজ ককবরক শিক্ষার কাজ মাঝপথে এসে থেমে গেছে।

কয়েকটি প্রস্তাব :

* রাজ্য সরকার ও স্ব-শাসিত জেলা পরিষদের সুস্পষ্ট শিক্ষা নীতি (Education Policy) এবং ভাষা নীতি (Language Policy) থাকা দরকার। এইসব নীতির স্বার্থে যুক্ত হওয়া দরকার সংখ্যালঘু উপজাতি ভাষাগুলোর নীতি ও শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে এই ভাষাসমূহ প্রচলনের নীতি কৌশল।

* ককবরক ও অন্যান্য সংখ্যালঘু উপজাতি ভাষাসমূহের উন্নয়নের জন্য সরকার ও স্বশাসিত জেলা পরিষদের স্থায়ী কমিটি (Tribal Language Development Committee) থাকা দরকার।

* রাজ্য সরকারের শিক্ষা দপ্তরের তিনটি Directorate হওয়া দরকার।

(1) Directorate of Higher Education.

(2) Directorate of School Education.

(3) Directorate of Kok Borok and other minority

Languages. — প্রত্যেক শাখার Director দের ক্ষমতা

ও পদমর্যাদা সমতুল্য হবে।

* ককবরক ভাষা সাহিত্যের উন্নয়নের জন্য তথ্য ও সংস্কৃতি অথবা উপজাতি কল্যাণ দপ্তরের অধীনে একটি Kok Borok Academy থাকা দরকার। বাংলা ভাষা ও সাহিত্যের উন্নয়নের জন্য পশ্চিমবঙ্গ বাংলা আকাদেমি যেসব কাজ করে ককবরক ভাষা-সাহিত্য উন্নয়নের জন্য সেসব কাজ করবে ককবরক আকাদেমি।

* ত্রিপুরা মধ্য শিক্ষা পর্ষদের (TBSE) একটি ককবরক দপ্তর (Kok Borok Deptt.) থাকা দরকার। Kok Borok Deptt. এর একজন সচিব থাকবেন। তিনি TBSE এর সচিবের সম পদ মর্যাদা সম্পন্ন হবেন।

* স্বশাসিত জেলা পরিষদ এলাকার সমস্ত S.B. High, H/S School গুলো পরিচালনার ক্ষমতা ও দায়িত্ব জেলা পরিষদের হাতে তুলে দেওয়া দরকার।

বিদ্যালয়ে একটি শ্রেণিতে ১০জন ককবরকভাষী, ১০জন বাংলাভাষী, ৫জন চাকমাভাষী, ৫জন মগ ভাষী ছাত্র, যদি থাকে তবে প্রতি (period) -এ, চারটি ভাষা মাধ্যমের জন্য চারটি শ্রেণিকক্ষ লাগবে, এবং চারজন শিক্ষক লাগবে। এটা কি সম্ভব?

- * ককবরক ভাষায় অঙ্ক, বিজ্ঞান, ভূগোল ৬ষ্ঠ থেকে ১০ম শ্রেণিতে পড়ানো খুব কঠিন কাজ। এখনই এটি সম্ভব নয়। পাঠ্য পুস্তক রচনার কাজ যেমন কঠিন, পড়ানোও কঠিন। ককবরকে অঙ্ক, বিজ্ঞান, ভূগোল পড়ানোর জন্য যোগ্য শিক্ষক পাওয়াও কষ্টকর।
- * যেসব বিদ্যালয়ে ১০০ শতাংশ এবং যেসব বিদ্যালয়ে ৫০ শতাংশ ককবরকভাষী শিক্ষার্থী আছে প্রথমে সেইসব বিদ্যালয়েই ককবরক ভাষা - ভাষা সাহিত্য বিষয় (Language Subject) হিসাবে চালু করা যেতে পারে। অন্য বিষয়গুলো যেমন - অঙ্ক, বিজ্ঞান, ভূগোল, সমাজবিদ্যা, ইতিহাস ইত্যাদি বিষয়গুলো বাংলাতে পড়বে। এই ব্যবস্থা প্রথম শ্রেণি থেকে দ্বাদশ শ্রেণি পর্যন্ত চালু করা যেতে পারে।
- * রাজ্য সরকারের সব বিদ্যালয় এবং স্বশাসিত জেলা পরিষদ পরিচালিত ১৩৪৬টি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়েই ককবরক Language হিসাবে চালু করা যাবে না। পরিকাঠামো ও শিক্ষক সমস্যা রয়েছে। বাছাই করে নিতে হবে কোথায় কোথায় পড়ানো হবে।
- * ককবরক Language -এর বিষয়বস্তু ও পুস্তক রচনা ও বিষয়বস্তুর মান (Standard) অবশ্যই C.B.S.E বা জাতীয় মানের সমকক্ষ হওয়া দরকার।
- * প্রথম শ্রেণি থেকে পঞ্চম শ্রেণি পর্যন্ত ককবরক মাধ্যমে পড়ে ৬ষ্ঠ শ্রেণি থেকে বাংলা মাধ্যমে পড়ার নীতি ত্রুটিপূর্ণ। এই নীতি (Policy) অত্যন্ত অসুবিধাজনকও।
- * বিদ্যালয় পরিদর্শনের ব্যবস্থা থাকা দরকার। অকারণেই অধিকাংশ বিদ্যালয়ে ঠিকভাবে পঠন-পাঠন হয় না।
- * সরকারের একটি নীতি লক্ষ্য করার মতো। ছাত্র-ছাত্রী যাতে বেশি দূরে হেঁটে স্কুলে যেতে না হয় তার জন্য প্রতি পাড়ায় একটি করে স্কুলের ব্যবস্থা। এতে বিদ্যালয়ে ছাত্র সংখ্যা কমে যাচ্ছে। কিন্তু শিক্ষক প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী দিতে হচ্ছে। তার মানে এমন অনেক প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় আছে যেখানে প্রতি শ্রেণিতে ১০, ১৫ ইত্যাদি করে ছাত্র। এক একটি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রছাত্রীর মোট সংখ্যা ৩০ অথবা ৪০ ইত্যাদি। এদের মধ্যে অধিকাংশই বিদ্যালয়ে আসে না। সেখানে শিক্ষক নিয়মিত যান না।

পৃথিবীর সব কিছুই পরিবর্তনশীল। সমাজ, ভাষা, সাহিত্যও পরিবর্তনশীল। সাফল্য ও ব্যর্থতাকে সঙ্গে নিয়েই ককবরক সামনের দিকে এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে। ককবরক সাহিত্য এখন বেশ বিকশিত। নতুন নতুন কবিতা, গল্প, নাটক ইত্যাদি লেখা হচ্ছে ককবরকে। বিগত দিনের এই ত্রুটিগুলো কাটিয়ে উঠলেই ককবরক ভাষা-সাহিত্য ও বিদ্যালয়ে ককবরক পঠন-পাঠনের বিকাশ ত্বরান্বিত হবে।

জেলা পরিষদেরও Secondary Education Board থাকা দরকার। বোর্ডে তিনটি বিভাগ থাকতে পারে।

(1) Primary Education

(2) Secondary Education

(3) Technical Education

* ককবরক লিপি বিতর্কের সুষ্ঠু সমাধান হওয়া দরকার। বিজ্ঞান সম্মত, যুক্তিপূর্ণ নীতিতেই এর সমাধান হওয়া বাঞ্ছনীয়। এ বিষয়ে আমার মতামত আমার নিবন্ধ - ‘ককবরকের লিপি প্রসঙ্গ ও বানান পরিকল্পনা’-তে উল্লেখ করেছি।

* প্রথম শ্রেণি থেকে দ্বাদশ শ্রেণি পর্যন্ত ককবরকে কী পড়ানো হবে তা আগে ঠিক হওয়া দরকার। প্রথম শ্রেণি থেকে দ্বাদশ শ্রেণি পর্যন্ত ককবরক একটি ভাষা-বিষয় (Language subject) হিসাবে পড়ানো হবে না অন্যান্য বিষয় ও (Subject) ককবরকে পড়ানো হবে তা ঠিক হওয়া দরকার।

* শিক্ষা কমিশনের রিপোর্ট ছাপিয়ে সর্বজনলভ্য করা দরকার। ককবরক উন্নয়নের জন্য কমিশনের সুপারিশগুলো কার্যকর করা উচিত।

* উপজাতি ভাষা কমিশনের রিপোর্ট প্রকাশ করা দরকার। রিপোর্টের বিতর্কের বিষয় ছাড়াও ককবরক ও অন্যান্য উপজাতি ভাষা সমূহের উন্নয়নের অনেক সুপারিশ থাকতে পারে। সেগুলি রূপায়ণের উদ্যোগ নেওয়া দরকার।

* উপজাতি উন্নয়নের জন্য রাজ্য সরকার ঘোষিত ৩৭ দফা কর্মসূচির মধ্যে ককবরক ভাষার উন্নয়নের জন্য যে কর্মসূচি আছে তা রূপায়িত করা উচিত।

* ত্রিপুরা রাজ্য সরকার ও স্বশাসিত জেলা পরিষদ এলাকার প্রাথমিক ও মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়গুলোকে কয়েকটি শ্রেণিতে ভাগ করা যেতে পারে। বিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষার্থীদের ভাষার উপর ভিত্তি করে এই বিভাগ তৈরি করা যেতে পারে। ত্রিপুরার বিদ্যালয়গুলোকে A, B, C, D এভাবে ভাগ করে দেখানো যেতে পারে।

A বিভাগ - এসব বিদ্যালয়ে ১০০% শিক্ষার্থী ককবরকভাষী।

B বিভাগ - এসব বিদ্যালয়ে ১০০% শিক্ষার্থী বাংলা ভাষী।

C বিভাগ - ৫০% ককবরকভাষী। বাকি ৫০% ছাত্রছাত্রী বাংলা ও অন্যভাষাভাষী।

D বিভাগ - ৫০% শতাংশ বাংলাভাষী, বাকি ৫০% ককবরক ও অন্যভাষী ছাত্রছাত্রী।

* ককবরক ভাষা, অথবা অন্যান্য বিষয়গুলোর মাধ্যম (medium) ককবরক করার আগের বিগত দিনের সমস্যা ও ব্যর্থতাগুলো পর্যালোচনা করা দরকার এবং সমস্যাগুলো চিহ্নিত করা দরকার।

* ত্রিপুরার অধিকাংশই বহুভাষী বিদ্যালয়। বহুভাষী বিদ্যালয়ে প্রত্যেক শিক্ষার্থীকে যার যার মাতৃভাষায় শিক্ষার সুযোগ করে দেওয়া খুবই অসুবিধাজনক। যেমন একটি প্রাথমিক

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10. Beside, there are persons who have lot of publications on Kok Borok language and literature like Late Mahendra Debbarma, Late Alindra lal Tripura, Sri Shyama Charan Tripura, Sri Manoranjan Majumder, Sri Santimoy Chakraborty, Sri Nitai Acherjee, Sri Sunil Debbarma, Sri Haripad Debbarma, Sri Ajit Debbarma, Smt. Sabita Debbarma, Sri Chandra Kanta Murasing and many others.



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(R.K. Acharyya)

